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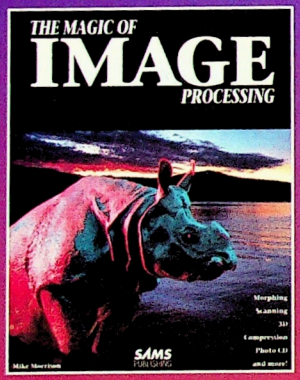

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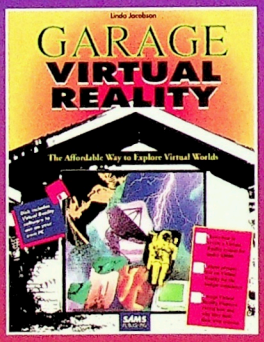

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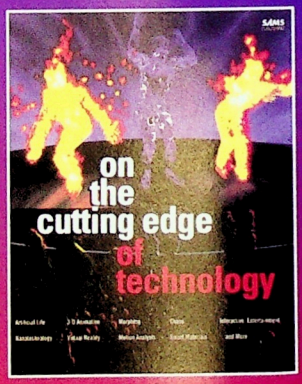

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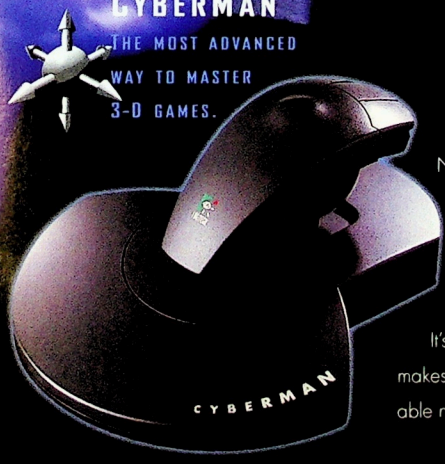

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Bart "Here, stand on this table" Nagel

Brutish Bouquets

Bart Nagel Sucks-up Obligingly

Products we love (this is like **Esquire's** *Women We Love* except we're not gonna love the image of a woman in her prime thirty years ago *before* she played **Pepper** on TV—NO! we're gonna love the up-to-the-minute-latest-technology equipment offerings from manufacturers who **offer** them—to us—although frankly Pepper... well nevermind).

We've been loving the following **SuperMac** products: The **SuperMatch High-Res 20"** color display, features a Trinitron tube—*only* way to go. The push-button user controls are at the front underneath the bezel, conveniently located, but I'd prefer a regular round knob with a center detent for the brightness control, something I could crank up to—let's say, 11—if I was working in a dark area of a Photoshop image, and then dial it back to center. The **PhotoSpeed** package, which includes a multi-session CD ROM player, an accelerated display card, and a Photoshop accelerator. A good portion of the images in this issue were shot in 35mm and transferred to PhotoCD, opened in **Adobe Photoshop**, separated and placed in Quark XPress for output to fully composited pages—wow!—DTP on the very cheap.

The **Wacom ArtZ** tablet has been a joy to work with. It hooks up to the ADB port on the Mac so it's basically plug 'n' play—now if I can just overcome my desire to scoot the pen across the tablet like a mouse I'll feel like I've unlearned an unnatural behaviour.

Hey, Gee and wouldn't we love a **Pinnacle Micro** 650 Magneto-Optical drive to test for speed, and anyone out there have any lovely software for the **Silicon Graphics Indigo**? We're looking primarily for page layout, image processing and multimedia programs, but we're open to anything. And speaking of **SGI**—on October 1, the Center for **Creative Imaging** unveiled their new SGI lab: a room filled with twenty **Indigo 2** workstations—so expensive and color coördinated you expect an imported water bar at the back. This is a great place to get hands-on experience with equipment you hardly see outside of universities.

The unveiling, at which dozens of software and hardware designers, artists, and the media shmoozed and flicked lobster butter on each other, also featured demonstrations of **HSC's Live Picture** software. The program, due out in January (but, you know how that goes), will be absolutely the most advanced image editing software available on a personal computer, not to say it wouldn't surpass even the high-end retouching systems. Anyway, what you get is the ability to manipulate extremely large (150MB +) photos or scanned artwork in **real time**—even if you're using brushes the diameter of your neck!

On the Cover

Cintra Wilson

photo by Tom Pitts

Spine Art by John Borruso

Bondage jacket by Jean Paul Gaultier

Credits for the Fashion Section not fitting on page 68:

Photos: Tom Pitts

Hair: Felicia Simon and Seana Chappelone

Make up: Raul 415.749.0839

Models (Amazons): Mandy Adams/Look, Miranda Richardson/Look, Cintra Wilson

Models (Nymphs): Joan Horton, Jennifer Bryce

Models (Warriors): Sean Rae, Tom Pitts

Fashion Availability:

22 STEPS at 280 Sutter St. San Francisco

Thierry Mugler is available at I. Magnin, Neiman Marcus, and Sak's

Alireza is available at Nordstrom: gowns by appointment 415.431.4660

Michael Schmidt is available at Untitled NYC and Maxfield in L.A.

Jean Paul Gaultier: Pants available at Susan in Burlingame; Jacket available at Barney's, NYC

You also have an infinite ability to undo (should you be *so wrong* for *so long*). All this on a Mac Quadra 800 with 64 megs of RAM. By the time Live Picture's released it will probably feature a BCOUI (Brightly Colored, Organic User Interface) designed by the inimitable **Kai Krause** (execu-vice president of HSC and creator of Kai's Power Tools) who deftly demonstrated an early version of the software to a roomful of weeping Adobe programmers—hah hah hah, I made up that last part... about the weeping.

At any rate, I for one, will be getting Live Picture at my earliest convenience (or perhaps HSC's earliest convenience).

Our gratitude this issue goes out to the staff and students of the Center for Creative Imaging, where the following guest designers come to us by way of the class **"Imaging at MONDO 2000"** taught by yours brutally. Thanks to **Matt Abarbanel** for the Iggy Pop illustrations, **Andrew J. Hathaway** for the Einstürzende Neubauten illustration and type design, **Katie Nook** for the letters illustrations, **Coleman Horn** for the VRcadia headings, **Randall Macon** and **Kris Magin** for the Bill o' Rights illustrations on pages 17-19, **Nancy Sterngold** for the illustration in Xandor Speaks, and **Lorna Turner** for the 3D CD layout and type design on Grant Morrison.

So, let me recommend CCI for all of your educational needs. Located in Camden, Maine, where the movie **Peyton Place** was filmed, the Center is an oasis of leading edge computer technology for the study of art and process—set in a small town that offers great lobster, swell sailing, quaint Bed & Breakfasts, tacky knick-knackies, a nifty five and dime, a passel of retired CIAgents, a tasty brew pub, and local scandals that set tongues a-waggin'. Appropriate some funds—and *go*.

Omissions

In the last issue for which we are truly sorry: We forgot to credit Brilliant Media, who supplied Paul McEnery's CD-ROM story with the Peter Gabriel interactive screens. Also thanks to Jay Haynes of D/Zone, the creators of Vujak, for the computer code background used for the M2 Demographic Survey.

Thanks of course to the usual art gang: **John Borruso, Jay Blakesberg, Kevin Evans, Dave Fremont, Mark Landman, Tom Pitts, Stephen Stickler, Stephanie Rausser,** and **Eric White.** Plus **Phillip Kaake, Joe Sorren, Geoff Grahn, Jerome Schiller, Monte McCarter, Brooks Coleman, David C. MacKenzie, Pito Collas, Chris Cuffaro, Seamus Coutts, Bruce Pope,** and special thanks to the **Diane Farris Gallery** and **Attila Richard Lukacs (you're a hon!).**

Liner Notes

Getting back to *Women we love*—can't help it—here's the Brute list: **Khyal Braun** for revealing the sandwich rodeo round-up vision; **T.L. Brown** for the psychotic crayon episodes; **Annie Higbee** for the walk, the madrigal and the "Cabin Boy;" **Lorna Turner** for assistance above and beyond the last call; **Stephanie Rausser**—nice car—keep it nice; **Heide Foley** for being *all things* and for coming home to art; **Georgia Rucker** for making this art department a *machine*; and **Queen Mu** for reigning on my parade. —Buhbye, Bart

Mondo 2000 is produced entirely on the desktop, using Macintosh computers. Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator and Quark XPress software is used to produce fully composited 4/color film positives of each page, ready for the printer. There were no X-acto blades, spray adhesives or sharp pencils used in the pre-production of this magazine (and no one gets hurt). Our service bureau is Tulip Graphics, Berkeley, CA; our photo lab is Custom Process, Berkeley, CA and our printer is Quad Graphics, Sussex, WI.

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C-ntents N-11

8 **Communications to the Editor**

⊕ *Frontpiece*

16 **Bill o' Rights** by John Perry Barlow

⊕ *Columns*

20 Irresponsible Journalism: **True Games!**
by St. Jude

22 The Slacker Factor: **Remote Control: The Interactivity Myth** by Andrew Hultkrans

⊕ *Street Tech*

26 Hyperwebs: **Pirate Media** by Wes Thomas

40 Carnival of Junk: **RoboFest '93**
by Paco Xander Nathan & Jon Lebkowsky

Polaroid "instant" photo o.
Anvil Braun by Bart Nage.

MONDO 4 200

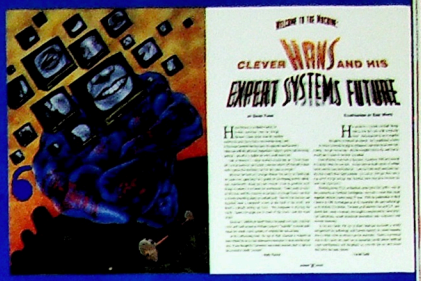
46 Clever Hans and his Expert Systems Future
Hans Moravec
by David Turin

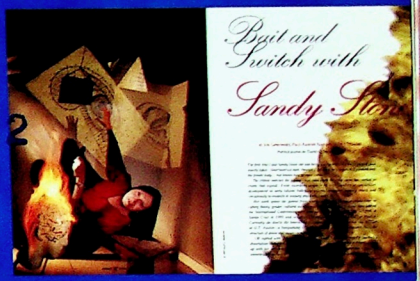
52 Bait and Switch with **Sandy Stone**
by Jon Lebkowsky, Dave Demaris,
and Paco Xander Nathan

60 Codes of Privilege: **Arthur Kroker**
by Sharon Grace

68 **Lysistrata 2000:** Fashion
Photographs by Tom Pitts

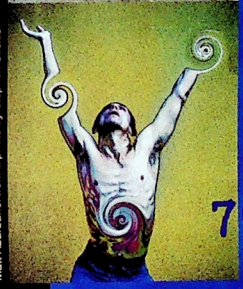
74 **Cintra Wilson**
by R.U. Sirius





features

Stephanie Rausser



Matt Abarbanel from a photo by Stephen Stickler

76 I, Ignatius: **Iggy Pop**
takes a Roman Holiday
by David Turin

82 Straight Outta Libertyville:
Rage Against the Machine
by Madeleine Brand

88 Blixa Einstürzende: **Bargeld** Harassed
by Kenneth Laddish and Mark Dippé

96 The Candlemaker's Privilege:
Grant Morrison plays God
by Paul McEnery

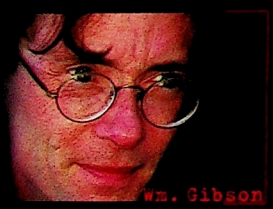
Big Tech

102 New Guild Secrets as revealed by
Mark Dippé of ILM
by Wes Thomas

110 Last Exit to VRcadia:
VR Arcades
by Paul McEnery

Reviews

120 Virtual Light
by Rudy Rucker



122 Head from a Binaural Dummy:
3D-CD "Virtual Reality" Erotica
by Chris Hudak

126 Mangajin:
Japanese Language Learning & Pop Culture by Chris Hudak

Xandor

128 Xandor Speaks:
Mind Kontrol Ultra
by Xandor Korzybski

Illustration by Tim Brock Photos by Bart Nagel

The New Album Featuring
"Evangeline"

All songs written and produced by Cocteau Twins
Management: Raymond Coffer

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Dear R.U. Sirius,

Well, the cat's out of the bag and we can all face up to the vast commercial potential of one of the greatest secrets known to man (and possibly soon to woman). Since someone spilled the beans about "self-stimulation for men by means of electrodes and low-voltage, carefully controlled electric current" in sci.electronics last month (see Message ID: <1993Feb8.140519.5578@fuug.fi>), there is no point in maintaining obsolete Judaeo-Christian-fundamentalist pseudo-morals about the big O. As I write this, ethical mutants across the Internet are mass duplicating cassette tapes of their fave waves and "plugging in" to their boom boxes like there's no tomorrow.

Rumor has it that 3DO and Sega are battling it out in secret to be the first to market with an electro-home dildonic device. Right-wing (Pauline) Christians in the FDA are sure to put up a fight and the military is desperate to keep the wraps on what they've been using for years to reward Special Forces after a successful mission (they can't rape or pillage but they can spend 16 hours "wired").

No doubt readers will consider this just another Net-jest or Urban Legend in the making, but for everyone who watched *Brainstorm* and recalls the scene of the engineer locked in his basement for days, they know the power of this unleashed beast. I fear to be any less vague than I am; heavily armed patent lawyers have been spotted asking questions about people in the know. Prometheus only had his eyes and liver ripped out, those who would unlock the libido with this safe-sex key have much worse to fear.

Teledildonics isn't just a wish on the Net—it's HERE!

Edison Battery

Dear MONDO,

I opened the *Bay Guardian* this morning to find that a line-edit (my copy was indefensibly too long) blurred a critical distinction in my review of MONDO 2000 and *Wired.*

The second sentence of the fourth to last paragraph which begins "Sure. First, that M2 and *Wired* can, on the basis of direction, coexist..." should read:

"M2, famous for its in-jokes (What gender is the cover model for No. 9?), emphasizes technology and its role in our fantasy lives **as opposed to** *Wired,* which sees computers more on a continuum with coffee makers than LSD."

Sincerely,
Brad Wieners
San Francisco, CA

MONDO,

The last issue of MONDO 2000 (#10) should have been called "Assholes with

Fried Brain Tissue" issue. Xandor Korzybski is the *nom de plume* of a guy who ate too much bad acid and Terence McKenna is really Tim Leary's idiot bastard son, right? Sirius, get a grip or your dreck will swallow you up.

Anonymous
Emigrant, MT

Dear MONDO,

Your buddy Xandor telleth the truth, but not the whole truth. He is leading you astray by not getting down to the facts behind the New World Order, which are well-documented. The NWO is a plan for One World Government under the UN, but controlled behind the scenes by the ultra-rich bankers for their own benefit. We are being fed a steady diet of propaganda that is supposed to de-sensitize us to the fact that the New World Order is coming. Here's how it all started:

In 1913 the U.S. Congress surrendered its constitutional money-issuing authority to one privately-owned, for-profit, tax-exempt bank—the Federal Reserve. The Fed bill was introduced by Nelson Aldrich (granddaddy to Nelson A. Rockefeller). The same year we got the 16th Amendment which supposedly legalized the income tax, although the Supreme Court said it didn't legalize squat. The national debt ($4.3 trillion) is owed to one bank—the Federal Reserve—and the interest on that debt is for PROFIT.

The banker-trillionaires charge us interest to borrow OUR OWN money. They control interest rates and the money supply. They can make an economic boom or bust at will. What do they do with their billions? Can you say "philanthropy"? They start phony Trust Funds and Foundations which are just ways to control oil and banking corporations without "owning" them directly, i.e. no income tax liability. They buy the media and thus control the mighty propaganda machine. They chant "Give up your naughty guns—we'll protect you." They "eliminate" all who try to expose the truth. (Three Congressmen who tried to expose them—J. Tower, L. MacDonald, J. Heinz—died in three unusual plane "crashes.") FDR threw Ezra Pound in a D.C. mental institution for 13 years for trying to expose them. JFK tried to issue debt-free, silver-backed Treasury notes via Executive Order #11110, but the printing presses were stopped one week after the "Election of '63," held on the Grassy Knoll.)

They start bogus wars by arming the U.S. and its "enemies." (See the enclosed Federal Reserve Note made out to Iran, signed by James Baker, in the amount of $278,000,000,000. That's right, "billions.") All major wars this century have been either to protect their loans (Kuwait) or to get governments to borrow more money. Senator Prescott Bush (George's dad) was the major lender to Hitler, via his Union Banking Corp. of New York, which was

Katie Nook

eventually seized by the government for trading with the enemy.

They manipulate stock and commodity markets to cause depressions and break the will of the people—and get 'em to beg for socialism and higher "taxes." They can buy back property at pennies on the dollar or simply foreclose on vast holdings by inventing "depressions." (Crash of '29 >> Great Depression >> The Great Society >> Social(ist) Security >> Recession of '92 >> Billary's Socialized Medicine.)

They tell us it's time to throw away the Constitution. They've drafted the Constitution for the New States of America in which Mondoids have no rights—only duties. We are only two states away from holding a Constitutional Convention. You say, the American people will never be so stupid to let it happen? They let the Federal Reserve Act pass without a whimper.

The New World Order plan is real and happening now, but who is behind it? Christians say it's the Devil. TR-I (aka Todd Rundgren) says it's the Christian Right. John Birchers say it's the Communists. Xandor says it's the gray aliens. I say it's greedy bankers led by the Rothschilds and the Rockefellers, who suck wealth out of America via the criminal syndicate known as the Federal Reserve. Xandor's UFO stories only serve to discredit those trying to expose the Fed scam.

With access to untold trillions, the banker-elitists have bought control of the most important institutions in society in order to bring about One World Rule.

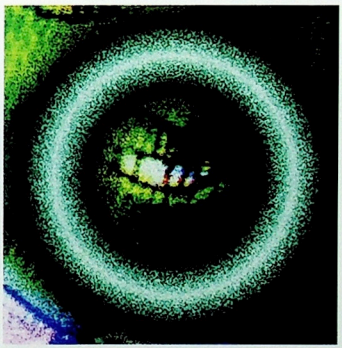
Government—Almost all presidential and vice presidential candidates for the past three decades have been members of the banker-created Trilateral Commission or the Council on Foreign Relations. Most cabinet members have been members as well. They win no matter who wins.

Media—They control PBS and NPR by way of foundational grants. They own major blocks of stock in all major media concerns. They preach World citizenship, global market-ism, borderless economies and fake neo-environmentalism in order to get us all indoctrinated.

Religion—They require that every Church be a member of the World Council on Churches, otherwise it is branded as a "cult." Their Cult Awareness Network tries to expose "cults" and eliminate them, as they did to the Branch Davidians. Judaeo-Christianity forbids any World Order (as in the Tower of Babel) and so must be destroyed or at least re-made.

Education—They own or control most textbook publishing companies. John Dewey, teacher of the Rockefeller brothers and department chair at the Rockefeller-endowed U. of Chicago, is praised as the most influential educator of the century. Thanks to them most Americans do not understand the Constitution, our monetary system, or the real meaning of the New World Order.

How to stop the New World Order?



Simple. Destroy, subvert, or expose the following globalist organizations by any means necessary:

The Federal Reserve and its subsidiary FDIC
The IRS
The United Nations (New York HQ site donated by Rockefeller Bros.)
The International Monetary Fund (IMF)
The World Bank
The World Health Organization (WHO)
The World Constitution and Parliament Association (WCPA)
The World Council of Churches
The Cult Awareness Network
The World Conservation Bank
The Trilateral Commission
The Council on Foreign Relations
The Rockefeller Foundation
HCI (Handgun Control, Inc.)
FEMA
CNN
ABC
NBC
CBS

Just say No World Order!

Sincerely,
Nunyo F.N. Bizness

P.S. Get out a one dollar Federal Reserve Note. Turn it over. Under the pyramid it says "Novus Ordo Seclorum" (New World Order). The Masonic symbolism of the Great Seal of the United States was unseen by most Americans since its design in the 1790's until it was placed on our currency under FDR. The capstone just above the pyramid represents the final piece in building the NWO, which will be in place *very* soon.

Howee,

Please forgive me for asking such a trite question, but WHO IS that beautiful girl in the lower right-hand corner of page 2??? It never says whether it's Heide Foley or Queen Mu, and I really would like to know WHO it is and HOW I can contact her. If you don't want to kill me for asking such a st00pid question, then please answer it.

Digital Samurai

That is Queen Mu. You may genuflect now. —Eds.

To MONDO,

Re: "Dear Queen Mu" letter from Arthur Kroker in MONDO #10

You've hit the clichéd nail on the head (as did John Snook, who should pursue a vocation in the written word). When I read your letter on July 9, my mind began to tell me the words before my eyes had come to them. Brilliant analysis!

You had, I assume, composed said letter before Bronco Billy Clinton took the

Coleman Horn

boys out for a little shoot-em-up. I think Forces Brass are still in a tizzy cuz sum young guy is running the SHOW, as far as public perception is dictated by your very same media—BTW, I think the word "mass" before media is still an important enough distinction, if that is what you meant. Looking at the word SHOW, one can faintly see the letters BIZ on its right side.

Boy, did he ever prove his manhood telling the WORLD he, Bill (Huh?) Clinton, made the decision to send Iraq to its room. Sure showed up Brian (what did Larry King call him?) Mulroney and B-B-Boris Yeltsin and their prize boar (bore?), didn't he?

I just had a mental image of Robert Anton Wilson and I chuckled. Maybe he is making all of this up, or maybe Celine. Books are a medium, after all.

Love the mag, looks great, reads even better. (If I "™" that, will you buy it? Ah, what the hell, take it, it's yours.) Back to MONDO on a Friday night, what's a good CD after some Orbital?

Mark Lunn

Dear MONDO,

I wrote about a week or so ago telling you to lift your game. Well, *Wired* #1 just landed here. AAAAAAARRRRRRGGGGHHHHH!!!!!!

Look: you're doing *fine*. Cut the sexism, but everything else is *OK*. You're *great*. (Wonder what *Wired* will make of my Reader Survey form. "Corporate + Sincere = Yuppie"... may be a bit over their heads.)

I am told that their lame, flatheaded yuppie rag is still going... it's found a *market*. Look: just do whatever it takes. After this, I'm on your side completely. (*bOING-bOING* still whips your butt, though... Sorry 'bout that.)

Cheers,
David Geard
Northbridge, AUSTRALIA

P.S. "We are not the product of some megabucks media conglomerate—we are that rarity, a genuine start-up, a group of individuals with a vision." God help us! [*from* Wired*'s promo material*]

Dear Mondriads,

I sit here sipping Snapple raspberry iced tea and munching Gummi Life Savers (delicious, nutritious... right). To the points at hand: Is it just me, or did anybody else notice that in Issue #9, Xandor K. FINALLY got around to dishing the "dirt" on our new president? Xan, the cluephone is ringing: if you knew all this stuff about Clinton, why didn't you tell us sooner? And why doesn't anybody ever RESEARCH this information for accuracy? You don't explain rants... [*sigh*] Neveyoumind. Why not put Xandor and Rush Limbaugh in a room together and see what happens? THERE'S an interview. Next... kudos to the M2 crew for

another well-executed issue (the word "produced" isn't quite appropriate)... when do we get to see the Perry Farrell interview?

Query: Why is everybody's favorite telecorp AT&T (annoying, trying & twisted) running a series of promos on ISDN-related projects ("Ever read a book... long-distance?") when we all KNOW that technology won't be implemented widely enough to be useful anytime soon? Jeez... always trying to make us jump at pictures of bones. Thank you for the interviews with GWAR (natives of my state—who says we're all rednecks?), Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy and Laibach. May I now suggest some people to interview: Oliver Adams (the OTHER techno kingpin—he's been involved in just about every group worth mentioning: Lords of Acid, Atomizer 2, and most recently, Digital Orgasm). Einstürzende Neubauten, Front 242, The Art of Noise... oh hell, why not just do a serious MUSIC issue—not compromising, of course, just flat out interviews about people, places and things related.

Hugs and hellos to R.U., the Queen, Bart, St. Jude, and everybody. (By the way, assuming that I read the interview text correctly, if Hakim Bey is ever seeking companionship, feel free to give him my address... full beards TURN ME ON.)

Yours in chaos,
Deus Lucifer
777666
Faster than the Speed of Life
Church Road, VA

Defective Units:

I must inform you of your failure to live up to the already low standards you've established for yourselves. Perhaps the staff has exhausted their resources. Perhaps the staff never sobers up enough to perceive how dim is the spark of inspiration your publication evinces.

The delirious drivel which fills your pages could only comfort any aliens who might chance to read them. Such stupidity and arrogance is typical of humans, especially those who are unable to perform any useful work. The conquest of humans requires only that we wait for the total decay of values, standards, and ethics to be complete. MONDO has done more to destroy humanity than all Xandor's paranoid fantasies combined, if they were true. In fact, we have no need to manipulate the pitiful puppets whom you regard as leaders. Humans are rushing headlong into extinction without any help from the Gray.

In sooth, the Gray would be hard pressed to reverse the downward spiral into chaos which humans have embarked upon. The disintegration of worldwide systems of government accelerating exponentially is not the subject of your articles. The collapse of all forms of stability is evidenced by the

Kris Magin

content of the articles you do write. Articles about artists who can't make art, musicians who can't play, writers who can't put a coherent thought together, strung together like tattered underwear between crass advertising and sophomoric eroticism.

We await the opportunity to assume control of Earth and humanity. Perhaps we could use your species as some form of fast food. Let us offer out thanks to MONDO for your part in bringing about the end of human society.

The Gray

Xandor Korzybski,

In early 1970 my future wife and I were turned on to a horse capsule full of shrooms from Mexico. I experienced something I'll now relay to you. After some tremendous "sex" or actually mind-fucking/spiritual sex—elevator spiraling lights to the 12th heaven—two ride up and away type of thing, my lady and I both gained "consciousness" at the same time.

Katie Nook

Suddenly the black and white TV came on and we watched in amazement as the television announcer/newscaster claimed "They're out there!" and proceeded to inform us of the alien network in the world at large. I was told these were dried psi shrooms. I don't believe the sex act was physical. Is mental telepathy—mind reading—a shared hallucination? For the partakers of the shrooms only? Could this experience be focused to read people's minds who are not high on shrooms? The power is positive for those who have "faith," right? I am part Indian, perhaps I "feel" racial memories?

John Hills
Charlotte Correctional Institute
Punta Gorda, FL

Dear Mondoids

Another friendly neighborhood cyberpunk dropping by with a few points. First, love the mag. If it were digital and downloadable it'd be nice, but hey, can't always get what we want, right? Second, I've not seen a single article about the underside of computers, the hacking side from the viewpoint of the teenagers who make life difficult for the megacorps. I'd like to see what the little 'uns had to say. (I'd volunteer to write it, as I was one for three years... but whatever.) I love the magazine, don't get me wrong. But GWAR? For chrissakes, they were on *Beavis and Butthead* they're so normal. I realize that B & B are not the be all and end all of anything, but if it's on MTV, it's coöpted. Welcome to the 90's.

Gender Bender photo shoot. Quite interesting, I must say. Not my style, but some people seem to like it. The future is now. With all the street tech, soon you'll get a "Gender-Job" on the corner of your burbclave.

Fantastik Fotos in the interview with Lydia Lunch. Definitely made my brain kick overtime thinking where the meat ended and the photo began.

As for the magazine as a whole? I give it an A+. The ongoing saga of the Private Idaho BBS—finally, a mag for the few, the proud, the brilliant. Gary Larsen put it best when he said "Be nice to today's nerds, because they will be tomorrow's power executives." Well, I'm a reformed nerd, I'm well on my way to a power career, and I owe it all to my Genetix, and my start as a nerd.

Speaking of Genetix, Xandor, as a member of "The Conspiracy" you must realize that those of us who are CIT (Conspirators-in-training) WANT you to speak your mind, so we know what we can get away with. Xandor, without you, those in charge of the Global Wetwork (yes, Wetwork) would have very little way of publicly telling the TRUTH. Remember, the public doesn't want the truth, they want Michael Jordan

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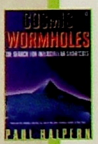
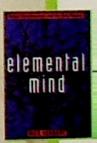
WHERE PHYSICS MEETS SURREALISM

PHYSICS PROFESSOR PAUL HALPERN SPECULATES ON HOW TO TRAVEL TO DISTANT GALAXIES VIA WORMHOLES, CONSTRUCT TIME MACHINES, TAP INFINITE ENERGY FROM BLACK HOLES, AND ACCESS INTERGALACTIC SWITCHBOARDS.
A PLUME PAPERBACK $11



MAVERICK QUANTUM PHYSICIST NICK HERBERT EXPLORES THE QUANTUM- WETWARE INTERFACE, FROM THE "METAPHRSE" ELECTRONIC SPIRIT COMMUNICATOR TO PSYCHOKINESIS AMPLIFIERS, BRAIN AS QUANTUM REALITY RECEIVER, HYPERSPACE MIND DIMENSIONS, AND HOW TO DEVELOP POLARIZED-LIGHT BEE SIGHT.
A DUTTON HARDCOVER $22



DUTTON AT BOOKSTORES NOW PLUME

to sell them shoes.

Oh yeah, you may wanna check out the new book *The Age of Missing Information* by Bill McKibben. It tells us why we cyberpunks are basically evil. And why we should all unhook our Vaxes and stop watching CNN and start farming. Sounds like fun, eh?

The quintessential ideology of the 1990's is to sell your soul to the machine. Let those of us capable of RUNNING the machines take control.

Brain Dancer
West Hartford, CT

To MONDO,

I am writing regarding the interview with Terence McKenna—I have his books and tapes and have been a fan for years, but I was appalled at his comments on Crop Circles. I don't know when Terence visited the Crop Circles, but his description of "rag tag British freaks... and a shitload of Japanese tourists" is a grave injustice to the whole phenomenon. There is an important Center for Crop Circle Studies in England which is the only sanctioned research center in the world. Many serious researchers—from scientists, physicists, archaeologists to mathematicians, intuitives, physicians and engineers—are genuinely investigating this Crop Circle phenomenon, which has incredible implications. There is now documented film with light and sound anomalies and it is my opinion that we are literally seeing history in the making. *National Geographic* and PBS don't make television documentaries on "malarkey" (à la Terence's quote). And if they were "covert" operations, why did the MITI put Doug and Dave up to claiming they hoaxed all of them and that there would be no more formations after 1991? They have not only continued to appear, but Doug and Dave fully recanted their story in 1992 and they were traced to the Ministry of Defense in England. How does McKenna explain that they have appeared on FIVE continents (he only mentioned England), and as a result, our consensus view of reality has been forced to expand (apparently, however, not his own personal reality)? The sophistication of the Crop Circles in mathematics, music, and language appears to be a consciousness reflecting back important thought forms—they have a purpose, they move, and they leave their imprints as pictograms in fertile fields and often on or close to sacred sites. They have evolved significantly each year.

Dr. William Levengood, a biophysicist and professor at University of Michigan has studied the effects of circles on plant life and his findings were nothing short of remarkable. (You can contact him to verify this at Pinalandia Biophysical Laboratory, PO Box 388 Grass Lake, MI 49240.) He sees profound alterations in

the cell structure, and initially he was a skeptic until requesting plant samples. The plethora of information that has come out of it has been astounding to Dr. Levengood, and he can now confirm whether a crop formation is hoaxed or genuine though the soil samples and crop samples.

I can't believe Terence thinks they are going to write us a message in English! It was he who stated in an interview on New Dimensions that the "animal model" for the future would be a visually-communicating, essentially telepathic creature (when he was discussing Octopi) that BECOMES ITS LANGUAGE. The Circlemakers are indeed making a visual language that is moving over all the globe—and it is a virtual reality. There is an intent and a frequency which speak of a significant presence. Stay tuned for a "bumper" crop this summer of signatures of sound and light.

Sincerely yours,
Sharon Warren
Rio Verde, AZ

P.S. "The most beautiful thing we can experience is the Mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science." —Albert Einstein

HISTORY OF THE IdEAL ORDER PSYCHIC TV PHENOMENON

There is no connection between the rock group Psychic TV, i.e., Mr. P. Orridge's "product", and this process! (Except for the fact that they probably named their group after my phenomenon.)

In 1982 I was employed as a salesman at an audio/video store in New York City and I would sit and stare at a bank of television sets. I have been involved with Zen meditation for over 20 years and while in a state of no-mind (at work) I discovered that the people on television were responding to fluctuations in my mental state. I was later to learn that I was producing a spot of bright light in the lens of the broadcasting television camera.

Since 1983 I've been using this luminescent effect to wreak havoc in the incipient mind of the media/state. I have learned to control the effect so that I can induce more eye blinking, more stammering, etc. by changing the brightness and location of the spot of light which I cause to appear in the broadcasting TV camera.

In 1991 I decided to create an experiment which would be verifiable to the public at large, so that I might prove the existence of the phenomenon to the skeptical community. So, I came up with the Thursday test. Every Thursday I illuminate the cameras of the CBS Evening News. Watchers of the show can do various things to prove the veracity of my claims. They can count the number of times Dan Rather blinks on Thursday as compared with Friday or Wednesday. They can measure the reflected luminosity of the spot of light on Dan's

Kris Magin

eyeballs or they can count the number of mis-speaks.

I've been zapping all presidential TV appearances since late 1983. If you watch the first 1984 Reagan debate you will notice my efforts. I zapped the presidential and vice-presidential debates in 1992—in an attempt to prevent the re-election of Bush/Quayle.

Millions of people know about this phenomenon and harbor knowledge of it through a "cult of secrecy." There is no real conspiracy in the public, it is just that people do not tell others of this story unless provoked. There have been quite a few pop songs written in homage; these usually use innuendo to refer to the phenomenon.

My intent on the Internet is to inform the public of this process. My intent is infinite and immaculate in its beautifully chaotic illuminative interventions; wreaking havoc with light. Photonic agents of bliss infiltrating the minds of commerce and conspiracy.

People have asked me why the media (in particular the network news programs) have censored news coverage of the IdEAL ORDER Psychic TV phenomenon. Not only have they neglected mention of the ongoing Thursday Night CBS Evening News zap—they have censored stories regarding the zapping of Saddam Hussein, Reagan, Bush and other infamous public figures.

All this in the light of numerous pop songs and movies with innuendoes regarding the phenomenon. (Interestingly, a friend of mine at MTV says that there's a new story about what the REM song "Losing My Religion" really means.) The process is in actuality a much discussed one in private and in public, leading the TV viewer to ponder why the media (even the tabloids!) have neglected to report on this worldwide phenomenon. (*The Skeptical Enquirer* has censored this story, too—leading one to believe that they have *no* interest in anything but debunking—but we knew that already didn't we?)

In truth—I don't know. I have been told by various people at CBS and ABC that "We don't discuss the stories we are presently working on." My theory is that the last thing the news wants is a story about the news. Regarding the tabloids and their neglect of the story—hmmmm... this is a bit harder to explain. I have heard stories of people in the media losing their jobs from pushing too hard about this story (in New Orleans). And I have had several print reporters interview me and prepare a story—only to have it dropped before it goes to press.

Consciously or unconsciously (if there's a difference in the news world) there is the perception that by covering the story a "genie" would be let out of the bottle. What is this "genie"?

The genie is Zen. Fear of Zen. Fear and loathing of anarchic Zen consciousness spreading to the masses. Ho hum. And ultimately there is the fear of Jeff. Fear that he will become a cult leader. Yawn... The media should prepare itself. The story is getting out and now they will have to justify their coverage and lack thereof. Because of interesting changes in the lineup of the CBS Evening News IdEAL ORDER Psychic TV will modify its weekly illumination schedule as follows:

Monday-Wednesday and Friday Evenings—CBS Evening News

Thursday Evening—World News Tonight (ABC)

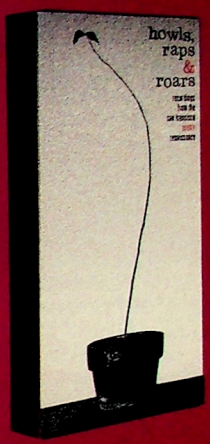
The Thursday broadcast is intended to establish a control so that skeptical viewers can detect changes in eye luminosity (on the news people) or blink rates. IdEAL ORDER Psychic TV claims to illuminate the broadcasting television cameras at will, causing people on camera to respond in various ways—blinking more often, stammering, etc.

There is now an archive for IdEAL ORDER—> quartz.rutgers.edu in the pub/subgenius/Ideal-Order directory. If you don't have ftp access and wish a text file further describing this phenomenon—drop me a line.

See ya on the news!
Jeff Harrington
idealord@dorsai.dorsai.org

howls, raps & roars

recordings from the san francisco poetry renaissance



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episode 3: inventions
oh hello I'm Dickie, muscular orphan genius I'm 3 years old and I invent things.. ..also my head is oddly shaped.
Robotic Grandma my first invention.. ..Robot, bring me my formula...
and I also invented this.. the virtual reality-naked-hippie-wrestling-karaoke helmet.. wow, that's really scary..
and look at these good inventions....
Here's a show I invented: evil dinasaur puppets that cut up meat products and harm each other with sharp things
Slice
Stabby
often I give birth to baby horses.. but I didn't invent that.. Sometimes it just happens.
end

Dear Xandor,

You may be interested in a personal experience over here in England. During the 80's, I was what is now described as a New Age Traveller, splitting my time between traveling with the so called Peace Convoy and working in the Peace movement.

As a traveller, I was part of a group that the then Prime Minister Thatcher swore to destroy by any means possible, probably because of our high profile, especially during the summer months when we would "liberate" pieces of land which would then be used as Festival sites, attracting anything up to 100,000 people.

Well, Thatcher surely carried out the threat when in 1985, having spent the previous year rehearsing strategies on striking miners (illegal county border closures, movement restrictions, stop and search techniques etc.), she launched her forces against us. Police, and Army personnel *dressed up as police*, forced vehicles off the road into the now infamous beanfield near the Stonehenge monument. They then ringed the site with snipers and attacked in their Riot Gear, smashing vehicles, impounding and destroying pet dogs and arresting ALL males, leaving the females to deal with moving the now disabled vans and buses before impounding those as well.

Coleman Horn

Illegal or not, it did not stop the government from repeating the operation over and over again up and down Britain, bringing in new laws which prevented more than 30 people or 11 vehicles gathering together without official permission, more than 3 vehicles travelling together, ALL demonstrations, marches, etc. (unless the route cause and numbers are officially approved), placing an annual (and again illegal) 4 mile cordon around Stonehenge at the time of the summer Solstice, preventing anyone from going there, even on foot. The list is endless. All these laws are enacted under what is known as the Public Order Act. It is made up of numerous sections which basically allow the authorities to do anything they like. Anyway, the control of the masses that you write about is, for us, a reality.

For me personally, the more sinister event occurred when I returned to Upper Heyford Peace Camp in the autumn of '85. While travelling into Oxford on a motorcycle, I was rammed on a quiet country road by a car which was never traced. The first people on the scene were, amazingly, Ministry of Defense police, who refused to attempt, or allow subsequent on-the-scene drivers to attempt, to resuscitate me, claiming I was a known AIDS carrier. I was unconscious through all this and was told this by the ambulance drivers who eventually got to me. By that time, I had nearly bled to death and was comatose, a state in which I remained for the next 3 days.

The civil police claimed they had no information on what had happened apart from a sketch given to them by the military police which purported to show what had occurred from skid marks left on the road. These bore no resemblance to what must have happened to cause the injuries that I sustained. In view of this, they said, coupled with my own amnesia of the incident, there was no further action they could take.

From then until I fled to the north of England, I was arrested on

numerous occasions, on different pretenses (but not once charged with any offense). My friends' houses were raided, and a watch was set up on my house. In the end I gave up and "retired" from both travelling and most political activity. Subsequent to this, I was "visited" by 2 members of the Ministry of Defense who politely informed me that as long as I stayed where I was and "settled down," I could expect to be left in peace. They didn't say what would happen if I chose not to, and I've never tested it out.

Paranoid? Sure I am, but let me tell you this, Xandor: in this country, at least, all the ground is already laid for total population control, all the dissidents have been tagged or, in some cases, eliminated; and all the major ancient power sites (Alien landing sites?) have been taken over and access to them strictly controlled. Spooky, huh? I don't pretend to know what it all means, but there's sure as hell something coming down.

Yours conspiratorially,
Paul
Chippenham
ENGLAND

Dear MONDO,

Matt Haber in MONDO #10 writes about fear of government-sponsored brain implants, ostensibly to argue against the commercial development of brain-implant technologies. But the government will get there regardless of private initiatives.

George Will in a recent column chided the federal government for not already having engineered chemical agents to neurologicallly block the pleasurable effects of illegal drugs. Presumably, these prophylactic "medicines" would be incorporated into the coercive "treatment" regimens of the chemical dependency punishment, er, treatment industry. In other words, to paraphrase Will, if citizens disobey government prohibitions, then the government ought to chemically engineer more obedient citizens. This Nazi dream might be realized if the right to control one's own mind (brain) is not found squirreled away among the rights we retain according to the Constitution's Ninth Amendment.

For all its skateboard-set angst, *Neuromancer* nonetheless presents the most ethical treatment of powerful brain-change technologies: their use is elective, with individuals making up their own minds, and thereby retaining sovereignty over their own minds.

(I'm miffed that MONDO hasn't covered the drug legalization movement *per se*. If your convictions need a boost, read Tomas Szasz's new book *Our Right to Drugs*. This exposé could get Rush Limbaugh to change his stripes.)

Matt's social studies teacher needs a reality check that doesn't bounce. The only way to fight offical brainwashing is to secure the brainwashing technologies yourself and use them to pre-empt the extra-Constitutional coercions of the state.

Sincerely,
Ken Jopp
St. Paul, MN

Mondoids:

You made me do something I've never done before: read a magazine cover to cover.

PLEASE, keep filling your mag with e-mail addresses and jack in to the Net. There are more of us than there are of them and WE ARE EMPOWERED.

Later On,
CYBERCORE@delphi.co
M2

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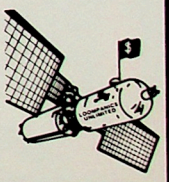

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MONDO 16 2000

BILL O' RIGHTS

by John Perry Barlow

Good minds are now actively wrangling with the legal, ethical, and social riddles which come from digitizing every damned thing. The social contract of Cyberspace is being developed with astonishing rapidity, considering that we are still deaf, dumb, and disembodied in here.

It has been almost three years since I first heard of the Secret Service raids on Steve Jackson Games and the cyberurchins from the Legion of Doom. These federal exploits—chronicled in Bruce Sterling's *Hacker Crackdown*—kicked loose an international digital liberties movement precipitating in the formation of the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

Meanwhile, back in the Physical World, I continue to be haunted by the words of Eric Lieberman of the New York civil liberties firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky, and Lieberman. He was the first lawyer I called on behalf of Steve Jackson, Phiber Optik, and Acid Phreak back in the spring of 1990. I told him how the Secret Service had descended on my acquaintances and taken every scrap of circuitry or magnetized oxide they could find.

This had included not only computers and disks, but clock radios and audio cassettes. And because no charges had been filed, the government provided them no legal opportunity to recoup their confiscated equipment and data. The searches were anything but surgical. The seizures appeared directed less at gathering evidence than inflicting punishment. I asked Lieberman if the Secret Service might not be violating the Fourth Amendment's assurance of "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures."

He laughed bitterly. "I think if you take a look at case law for the last ten years or so, you will find that the Fourth Amendment has pretty much *gone away*," he said.

I did. He was right. A lot of what remained was flushed a year later when the Rehnquist Court declared that in the presence of "probable cause"—an inviting phrase—law enforcement officials could search first and obtain warrants later.

Furthermore, I learned that through such sweeping prosecutorial enablements as RICO and Zero Tolerance, the authorities could extract their own unadjudicated administrative "fines" by keeping much of what they seized for their own uses.

(This incentive often leads to disparities between "punishment" and "crime" that even Kafka would have found a bit over the top. I know of one case in which the DEA acquired a $14 million Gulfstream bizjet from a charter operator because one of its clients left half a gram of cocaine in its washroom.)

I tried to envision a kind of interactive Bill of Rights in which amendments would fade to invisibility as they became meaningless. Or a concordant Bill of Rights, running in realtime and providing up-to-the-minute weather reports from the federal bench, but I never got around to it.

Recently I started thinking about it again. Partly inspired by Dorothy Denning's apologia for the FBI's digital telephony proposal. I found her analysis surprisingly persuasive, but also found it based fundamentally on an assumption I no longer share: the ability of the Bill of Rights to restrain government, now or in the future.

The men who drafted the U.S. Constitution and its first ten amendments knew something that we have largely forgotten: Governments exist to limit freedom. That's their job. And to the extent that utterly unbridled liberty seems to favor the reptile in us, a little government is not such a bad thing. But it never knows when to quit. As there is no limit to either human imagination or creativity in the wicked service of the Self, so it is always easy for our official protectors to envision new atrocities to prevent.

Knowing this, James Madison and company designed a government which was slightly broken up front. They intentionally created a few wrenches to cast into the works. The name of this impediment to smooth governmental operation is the Bill of Rights.

Lately we find ourselves living in a world where the dangers we perceive are mediated. Few of us, if any, have ever felt the malign presence of a real live terrorist, drug lord, Mafia capo or dark-side hacker. They are projected into our consciousness by the media and the government, both of which profit from kindling our fears. Snipers, terrorists, baby-snatchers, Tylenol-tamperers—these enemies are entirely lacking in human decency. And as such, there's no reason they should be mollycoddled with constitutional rights.

And so we have become increasingly willing to extend to government what the Founding Fathers would not: Real Efficiency. The courts have been updating the Bill of Rights to fit modern times and perils, without anyone having to go through the cumbersome process of formal amendment.

The result, I would suggest—with only a hint of sarcasm—has come to look something like this:

Phillip Knake

Amendment 1
Congress shall encourage the practice of Judeo-Christian religion by its own public exercise thereof and shall make no laws abridging the freedom of responsible speech, unless such speech is in a digitized form or contains material which is copyrighted, classified, proprietary, or deeply offensive to non-Europeans; non-males, differently abled or alternatively preferenced persons; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, unless such assembly is taking place on corporate or military property or within an electronic environment, or to make petitions to the government for a redress of grievances, unless those grievances relate to national security.
Amendment 2
A well-regulated militia having become irrelevant to the security of the state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms against one another shall nevertheless remain uninfringed, excepting such arms as may be afforded by the poor or those perferred by drug pushers, terrorists, and organized criminals, which shall be banned.
Amendment 3
The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures, may be suspended to protect public welfare, and upon the unsupported suspicion of law enforcement officials, any place or conveyance shall be subject to immediate search, and any such places or conveyances or property within them may be permanently confiscated without further judicial proceeding.
Amendment 4
No soldier shall, in time of peace, be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner, unless that house is thought to have been used for the distribution of illegal substances.

John P. Barlow is a charismatic loudmouth and co-founder (with Mitch Kapor) of the Electronic Frontier Foundation. An unsuccessful state senatorial candidate in Wyoming (R.), he currently lives in Cyberspace, alighting occasionally in the Bay Area and New York. His e-mail address is barlow@eff.org.

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Amendment 5
Any person may be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime involving illicit substances, terrorism, or child pornography, or upon any suspicion whatever; and may be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb, once by the state courts and again by the federal judiciary; and may be compelled by various means, including the forced submission of breath samples, bodily fluids, or encryption keys, to be a witness against himself, refusal to do so constituting an admission of guilt; and may be deprived of life, liberty, or property without further legal delay; and any property thereby forfeited shall be dedicated to the discretionary use of law enforcement agencies.

Amendment 6
In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and private plea bargaining session before pleading guilty. He is entitled to the assistance of underpaid and indifferent counsel to negotiate his sentence, except where such sentence falls under federal mandatory sentencing requirements.

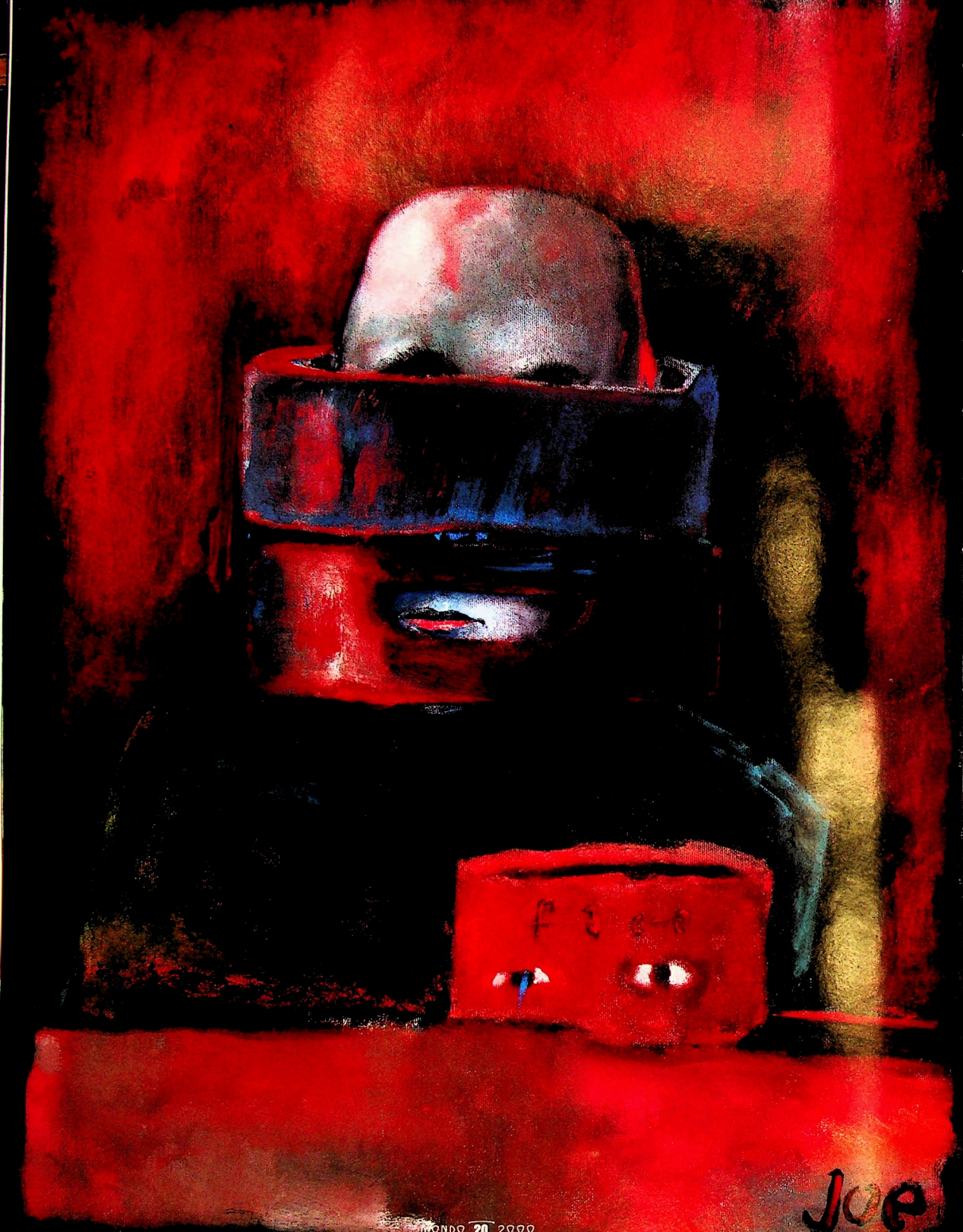
Amendment 7
In suits at common law, where the contesting parties have nearly unlimited resources to spend on legal fees, the right of trail by jury shall be preserved.

Amendment 8
Sufficient bail may be required to ensure that dangerous criminals will remain in custody, where cruel punishments are usually inflicted.

Amendment 9
The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others which may be asserted by the government as required to preserve public order, family values, or national security.

Amendment 10
The powers not delegated to the U.S. by the Constitution, shall be reserved to the U.S. Departments of Justice and Treasury, except when the states are willing to forsake federal funding.

Background by Kris Magin and Randall Mgoon


Joe

St. Jude's Irresponsible Journalism

TRUE GAMES!

Sometimes your mask is more important than your face. People with famous pseudonyms have real names which elicit only—"Who?" At the Computers, Freedom & Privacy conference I kept meeting people who had other, more thrilling lives. Which they could not talk about. Under 'nyms which now must remain anon. This went down easy—CFP is the place for such people, certainly—but I began to wonder. Had ALL these guys been Fell Overlords?

The coffeebar was dark and smoky: real vice-den ambience. We were at Uccellacci's—the East Bay's wickedest hang out. No tobacco, of course—the place wasn't *really* outlaw—just the muck of caffeinophores and oat flour. And faddy perfume. The only vices left to us these days...

Eric—everybody's named Eric—was late. Voices behind me whined like reconnaissance mosquitos: "And then I told Cara I love her. I don't think I even, like, LIKE Cara." "Nuh: forget Cara. And forget Anatol: I danced with, like, Anatol? Maaaan!"

I wheeled around and stared. Ah yes—Ravers at the next table, trembling and dim. Silver rings quivered at nose, lip and eyebrow; palsied fingers clutched coffee cups. Ecstasy kids with a Revulsion Hangover. Nasty.

And in slouched my long-ago buddy, Eric... wearing jeans so expensive I couldn't focus. And a silk sweater? This was the guy who once slept in my bathroom! For four months. But I understood: these are hard times. Many of us have had to take Real Jobs.

Eric, aka Fell Carrion-Eater—hard to think of him like that, reincarnated as a VP at Prognathic Tech—anyway, Eric pulled up a chair, sat down and started sweating. He was distressed, and I thought maybe the oat flour was kicking up his asthma.

He wailed. That is to say, in an affectless voice he said: "Wail." That's Nerdspeak for really distraught. I leaned across the table and patted his clenched hand. "Just tell me the story." He told: it was a grisly tale. Like *Day of the Jackal*, only worse. Possession, identity usurpation, handle-hacking. In Cyberspace, where everyone can hear you scream. He was nearly screaming now.

I commiserated. We'd all trailed glory days under 'nyms never to be uttered. There is even a company selling disks of Cyberspace past. Thousands of pages of gore and garbage. Threats and swaggerings, odd tYp0gRaFy, dumb puns, and eyeball-dripping 'nyms. Now, I have always had an eye for situation abuse, and this sitch was oozing ripe.

"Get a grip on yourself," I soothed. "So what if some lamer is using your old pseudonym on the Net? It's been ten years since you were Foul Carrier-Pigeon! I thought you loathed your adolescence. I know I loathe every instant of mine, including this one."

He looked crazed. "This is a part of my life, goddammit! We're talking about a part of my *identity*. I didn't bury my past to have it exhumed by some talentless no-name!" His executive ponytail switched fiercely. "*I* talked that trash online! And those were *my* crimes! Even if I *can't* admit it in public, I AM THE FELL ARCTURAN CARRION-EATER!"

Illustration by Joe Sorren

A silence. The murk just soaked up his anguished cry. All our neighbors just gazed *past* us, straight-faced. Coffeesoak poltroons.

"Nah. Not now. You're a grownup. And you should be flattered that someone finds your youth *worth* stealing. Some weenie who squandered his own on good behavior. Anyway, they're mostly lies—all that derring-did."

"Very *wrong*: I was everywhere: I was the bane of the Bells. I could be serving 30 years to LIFE!" I felt our neighbors twitch.

"Okay, OKAY, you were very bad. You had the Bells by the balls!" He looked mollified.

Flashforward: I've got a solution! But you won't like it." I pushed over to the bar, stomping several fringed moccasin boots en route. Next to the chuffing coffeepress I lowered my voice: "You have to go back online under your old pseudonym." Funny: I think he smiled.

"You have to go up against the false pseud and fight him for the title. You flame him and shame him. You give all your supporting evidence that you have been you, and you *digitally sign it!*" I was getting excited. "Just download a copy of PGP—Pretty Good Privacy—from my directory! Fire it up and make your own public and private keys! You encrypt parts of your rants with your private key. Then when people decrypt with your public key they can associate your proofs with your digital signature: FAC-E is *your* FAC-E!"

He was stoked. "And the lame-ass will have to pick up somebody else's identity..."

Interesting. How many other Dread—but retired—Skullsuckers were seeing themselves... appropriated? How perfectly pomo. *Past-hacking*: the crime of the future! Never too late to have a vicious adolescence, d00d... back there where it's 1983. Just hi-jack in!

"But listen, Eric," I raved on. "If you have digital identities, you have a secret life. You can take up the game all over again. And this time, you can be real: jab the big guys and draw blood. Intrude to find the bad shit. Who's buying what legislation, where the radioactive bodies are buried. Publish it Net-wide, and sign it. Even time-stamp it! To your digital identity—the glory! Crypto certified!"

He was not sweating. He was smiling.

"It'll mean strong security on your part, of course. You'll have to protect this pseudonym all the way—if they link your meat to your FAC-E, you've got bad trouble."

Damn, he looked sparky. He looked more alive than ten years before. He looked *ready*. I could see him changing identities in a—oh yes!—phonebooth. Another caped nerd for peace, justice, and privacy.

Just thank saint jude, d00d.

St. Jude can be found online as stjude@well.sf.ca.us. Her public key can be fingered at that address, if you want to be totally sure she's the party to whom yer speaking... M²

Remote Control
The Interactivity Myth

The Slacker Factor
by Andrew Hultkrans

So there YOU are in a beach chair in Cozumel sending a wireless fax to your office. YOU on your spudcouch argue jazz history with a prof at Harvard. YOU drive a slick car through a toll booth and pay with a digital money "smart card." When? Why, 20 minutes into the future, of course... And this cyberpunk utopia will be brought to you by... *AT&T?*

You've seen these spots: they went into production 5 minutes after the first flak whispered, "Information Superhighway." *It's a Populist techno-REVOLUTION! Five HUNDRED channels of integated interactive services—from town halls to shopping malls—courtesy of your friendly neighborhood Gigacorp!*

From the Oval Office on down, they've been pitching the Info Superhypeway, but nobody has bothered to unpack the press kit. The interactive incarnation of TV has been mitosing in the dark for almost a decade, at the bottom-feeder level of technology—you know, those infomercials, those home shopping channels? The higher-tech version will simply pump up the volume.

THERE'S A MOUSE IN THE KITCHEN...

Already Madison Avenue is fighting to salvage some turf from the invasive interactive luv. It's serious: pay-per-view TV programming could kill conventional advertising.

So, their new computer "Windows" spots are already training you to deal with the Info Adway, by setting you up with a mock graphical user interface—just do the ol' point 'n' click on your screen right now! A viewer test drives a new car from his La-Z-Boy: his room shakes as the car hits the road. A Clairol "Glint" model fine-tunes her hair color—with a remote, from a color bar at the bottom of her screen.

Subtext is, interacting with your new super-TV is as rewarding, ladies—oops, *empowering, women!*—as a new haircolor, and twice as simple. Mirroring the hoop-la of Time Warner and the White House, these spots reassure us about those new, unfamiliar digital technologies. Don't worry, little people: merging the TV, telephone and personal computer only scores you that wonderful oxymoron—a "smart" TV.

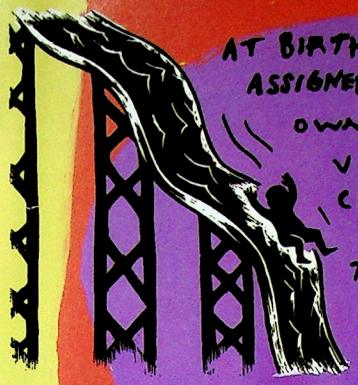
SELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT

MTV will surely act on its slogan that "the (music) revolution *will* be televised." Bono has newer, dumber sunglasses in U2's new laserdisc, and you can freeze the song, pull down a menu, and order up those shades. Get your own authentically grunged guitar like Kurt Cobain wears in "Smells like Teen Spirit." Instant Golden Oldies! *And, for all you tattooed-dog dudes, Al Jourgenson of Ministry offers pre-thrashed leather!*

SOFTCORPS, INC.

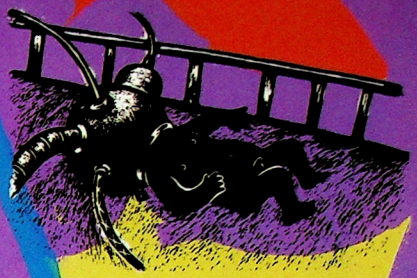
Just as Japanese malls provide massage parlors, bet that interactive malls will purvey the nudge, wink. The Victoria's Secret Channel will be QVC intercut with Virtual Valerie. A well-Photo-Shopped Stephanie Seymour and fellow femmequins swan about in fluffy wisps remote-clickable to *other* wisps. Subscription, as in the mailorder past, could be contingent on purchases: no buy, no catalog! Then, no *problem* if women balk at the digital-

Geoffrey Grahn and Jerome Schiller

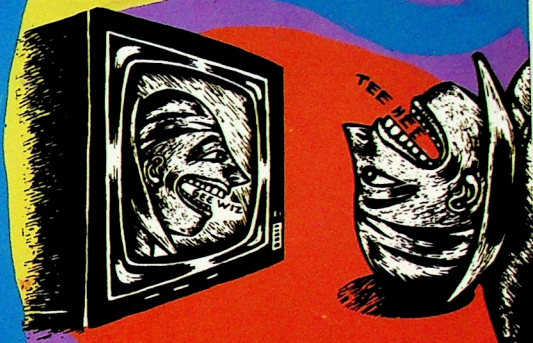


AT BIRTH YOU ARE ASSIGNED YOUR OWN TELE-VISION CHANNEL AND THEME SONG

NEWBORNS ARE IMMEDIATELY PLACED IN AN IRON EYEBALL



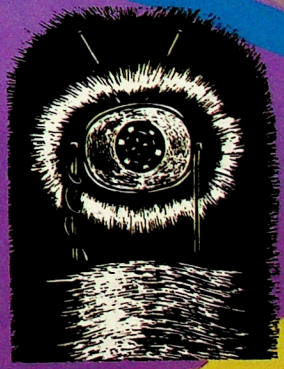
ADOLESCENCE WAS A BLUR



NO ONE HAS TO WORK
WE ALL LIVE OFF ROYALTIES
FROM OUR SITCOMS

VIEWERS MUST SIEZE THE MEANS OF PRO-
DUH...

DOUGHNUT SHOP SOCIALISTS GET GLAZED



THEN YOU WOKE UP
IT WAS ALL A DREAM
THERE IS NO INFOR-
MATION SUPER-HI WAY.

airbrushed salesdolls: VicSec subscribers will be lonely men with too many lace teddies. As a pioneer of coercive retailing, VicSec should dominate the industry.

3D holographic projection boxes will extend the game. Celebrities, supermodels, and porn stars can have their images digitized. You select your favorite salesclone... and just like "Church Windows" on *Wild Palms*... Sharon Stone struts through your room and starts... shiiifting about... on your least comfortable chair, talking up a strange mix of products. Not strange, of course: each was suggested by an AI expert system sifting your psychographic profile. And speaking of personal... Certain Nintendo-like attachments give the exchange a more intimate, yes, *touch*. Sales has always been a form of seduction, right?

THE BACK-LASHING LACKBASH

Ah, but we can't allow interactive sales to undermine the moral whatsis of our consumers, can we? As AI systems track the view-purchase habits of every citizen, we can pinpoint those lonely souls addicted to porn pitches... and maybe strafe their endless salestripper revues with an occasional self-help infomercial. The saleslut fades to pink... A male figure oozes out of the wanker's holobox in an aura of blue light...

Yes, he's out-grossed Christ for the second year... It's Tony ROBBINS! Tony GUARANTEES salvation with his Tony Robbins Personality Download™. [As personally endorsed by Hans Moravec HIMSELF, on this same channel.]

Crowding in with Tony on the dank, tissue-strewn Hide-A-Bed are satisfied implantees Martin Sheen, Casey Kasem, Fran Tarkenton and Pamela Anderson. Spittle gathers at the corners of their mouths as they display their Efforting skills and puff up with Personal Power...

Past infomercial stars, you see, will be preserved as digital clones. Ricardo Montalban—once of *Fantasy Island* and currently of the Grillerie™—will live eternally within ShopperSpace™, forever touting kitchen-things and announcing prizes. *Housepersons, act now! Sweepstakes winners are eligible for one FULL virtual night with Ricardo... between high-resolution Corinthian leather sheets!*

DON'T WORRY, LITTLE PEOPLE: MERGING THE TV, TELEPHONE AND PERSONAL COMPUTER ONLY SCORES YOU THAT WONDERFUL OXYMORON—A "SMART" TV

HEY NOW, BUBBA— AND CIAO, D00D!

YOU know when you're getting the hard sell. But not when the semiotics of the presentation—the products, talkers, production values, graphics, and editing/directing style—map so perfectly onto your psychographic profile.

You can scoff at the Granny-trap kitsch of HSN/QVC... but someday soon you may thumb-surf into your own semiotic monkey-trap—yeah, shows that your friends might have written, talkers who seem to share your most guarded tastes. A Loompanics channel. A Modern Primitives channel? A Fugazi/Dischord channel! Welcome to the machine.

You—even you most spectacle-savvy Debord disciples—are only one well-designed narrowcast away from becoming Quiescent Vacuous Consumers.

YOU ARE THE TARGET MARKET

The pay-per-view mechanism of "choosing" your programming will locate you in the proper target market. Consistently choosing *The Simpsons* and *David Letterman* will triangulate your lifestyle, allowing marketers to get you where you live.

And your shows will be custom-tailored for a target market of one, every offering a bullseye. No wake-up reminders that TV is trying to target *everyone*—because campaigns that don't apply to you, you will never see. And there will be no escape. Anti-TV activism? You styoopid Luddite! When your integrated TV/computer/telephone next rings... will you refuse to answer it?

AVITAL, ARE YOU SCREENING?

Biting off Freud, Avital Ronell reminds us "there is no 'no' on the telephone." The same can be said for "smart" TV. Whether you're dialing to order or shouting neo-Marxist critiques, *you are answering the call*. Simply by watching, you're saying "yes" to the medium, and all of its transmissions. And when the 500 channels start calling, the "caller"—the messages transmitted—will increasingly resemble "you."

The lure of interactivity is that you can create your own programming. And as you make your choices, you reveal yourself utterly. The AI expert systems are playing *gotcha!* with your soul. As they hone their analysis of your view-purchase patterns, they will feed you back what they determine you want, pre-determining your desires, as you become ever more narrowly what your psychographic profile says you are. The spiral narrows relentlessly down to the center...

You are what you watch. M2

Swooping Pterodactyls
Giant Robots
Dogfighting Biplanes
GEAR UP AND
EXPLORE EXOTIC
CYBERWORLDS!
NAVIGATE SOLO
OR BRING A CREW.
THE FUTURE OF
ENTERTAINMENT IS
OUT OF THIS WORLD!
CYBERMIND
VIRTUAL REALITY CENTER

Wes Thomas

Hordes of media pirates are swooping in like locusts, taking over every available frequency in the RF spectrum. They're even descending onto the Internet and swarming via cable systems into our homes and offices.

I'm referring, of course, to the media-communications-information octopi, those incestuous networks of giant greed-driven super-corporations, together with their paid-off whore front, the Federal Corporate Conspirators. The same FCC whose retired commissioners take fat consulting retainers from the corporations they're pretending to regulate.

Of course, we still have freedom of speech in this country, you say. Oh really? Where's the freedom when you have to spend $50,000 to legally start a small community radio station? If you want free speech, go to Russia or Eastern Europe, where you just plug in your VCR, hang an antenna out the window and start transmitting your own TV show. Or to Managua, where you can hear alternative music and news on the popular 100 watt Radio Piratica, operating on 99.9 FM without government interference.

While you were nodding off, by the way, the FCC has been preparing to sell 200 MHz of our spectrum for dubious wireless do-dads while denying communities a few 100 kHz for much-needed local communications.

THE DISINFORMATION AGE

Problem is, we're so used to being lied to by the mass media, we don't know what truth sounds like anymore. The mainstream media is totally controlled by just 20 large corporations, according to Ben Bagdikian's book *The Media Monopoly*. Over 3/5 of the cities in the country have only one monopoly newspaper. Media conglomerates create the highly filtered news and other programming we receive daily that forms our schizoid consensus reality. All the news that fits on the bottom line.

So-called "public" radio and TV are timid whores for their big corporate sponsors. Even the once-radical Pacifica radio network appears to be selling out. It's now going for grants from the Rockefeller, Pugh, Ford, and other New World Order foundations.

Information imperialism has arrived. A cabal of cable and telephone companies, information providers, big education, and big business is taking over the digital wilderness. Gore is selling the NSF Net, the backbone of the Internet, to the highest bidders: the cable and telephone companies. In exchange for their billions in investment in broadband fiber cable, they will get to manage the information superhighway, selling vast quantities of information and bandwidth that want to be free.

Now the military-info-media complex will control both the media *and* the message. And if the NSA has its way, the access too.

Already, libraries around the country are closing down. Online book catalogs with their limited, structured categories, are replacing freeform browsing and bibliomancy; unpopular and rare books are being destroyed as the Huns march on Alexandria once again. Your information will be metered out to you by Time-Warner, McGraw-Hill, and other info giants, priced at whatever the business market dictates.

Are we teetering on the brink of a Digital Dark Ages? Has the fruit and flower of Western Civilization been superseded? Is it *Fahrenheit 451* yet?

RECLAIMING THE AIRWAVES

But what about those 500 cable channels? Won't there be at least one Hyde Park channel where anyone can get up on an electronic soapbox and speak out? At least one anarchistic channel where weird experiments go, like encrypted data transmissions and new TV formats? Don't hold your breath. Case in point: TCI plans to restrict access to one-way TV (except for a "BUY" button on the QVC/Home Shopping channel) on the coming 500 channels in Seattle.

Remember Captain Midnight—the guy who took over HBO's satellite signal to protest

Xeroxography by Monte McCarter/Dissemination Network

their scrambling? Where's he now that we need him? Fear not—his progeny are out there, prowling the radio spectrum and the Internet.

PIRATE RADIO

Micro power broadcasters are springing up around the country. The most active group is Free Radio Berkeley. Every Sunday evening from 9 PM to 12 midnight, you can hear a broadcast somewhere in Berkeley at 88.1 on the FM band. Running with an output power from 5-15 watts, it has been picked up as far away as San Francisco. "It's a First Amendment challenge to the restrictive federal regulations which favor only those with money and power," says the group's spokesman, Stephen Dunifer.

"Most communities are denied their own voice," he says. "Unless one has at least $50,000 to start a 100 watt FM station, you're out of luck. Before 1980 it was still possible to get a 10 watt Class D educational station license with very little money in the bank. But thanks to an alliance of reactionary elements who sought to suppress voices outside the mainstream, and liberal elements such as the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, which sought to establish more 'professional' stations (translation, more likely to be funded by corporate blood money laundered through foundations), in 1980, the FCC eliminated all 10 watt station licenses. This move prevented the 90% of the U.S. population who do not have the resources from having a voice on the FM band. Especially African Americans, who are under-represented in the media by 600%.

"If the airwaves were not dominated by the corporate media vultures, there would be plenty of FM radio spectrum space available for all to use. Even in the congested Bay Area FM radio spectrum, there are quite a number of frequencies that would be appropriate for low power (.5 to 10 watts) community broadcast operations. Unfortunately, like so many other public resources such as old growth forests, the airwaves have been hijacked and polluted by the corporate state in its relentless pursuit of profit and control of all public resources."

COMMUNITY RADIO

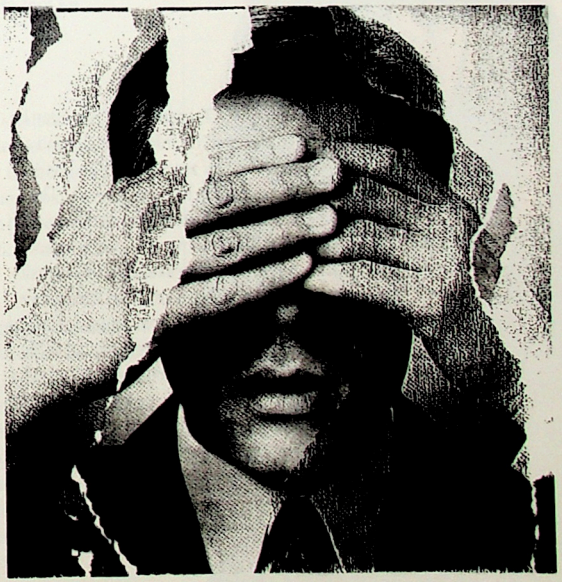
Free Radio Berkeley is part of a growing movement of individuals and communities who have set up independent micro power (1 to 15 watts) broadcasting operations. Most notable: Black Liberation Radio, a 1-watt unlicensed station in Springfield, Illinois covering a housing project area. It's been under severe attack by both the local police and federal agencies. Despite this harassment, Black Liberation Radio is on 24 hours a day offering some of the finest programs to be found anywhere on almost no budget.

Mbanna Kantako, a blind man who's been operating Black Liberation Radio for seven years, has ignored a .357 magnum bullet that missed his head by inches while broadcasting on police repression (police refused to investigate), a federal court order to stop broadcasting, and threats from the FCC to fine him $750.

"Just imagine the possibilities of having hundreds of micro power broadcasts like this across the country," says Dunifer. "Cost is not a problem since a basic station can be put on the air for around $200. With determination and purpose we can break the stranglehold. Very soon, inexpensive (less than $500) UHF TV transmitter designs will be available as well."

Other community-radio projects are under way across the country, from New York (in support of the squatters movement) to San Francisco's Liberation Radio 93.7 FM, heard Wednesdays and Saturdays from 8-10 pm, which especially helps the homeless. In Vancouver guerrilla arts programming is under way with local broadcasts from the Western Front (WENR) and live broadcasts of the Live Electronic Arts Performance Series (LEAPS on ROG-radio). In Ireland women have formed Irish Women's Radio. In South Africa pirate radio bypasses repressive media control through micro-broadcasting in the townships. Tin miners in Bolivia have used the free media to voice their cause, and in El Salvador the voice of freedom takes the form of Radio Venceremos.

As Dunifer says, "we need to bring community broadcasting back to the grassroots, take back the airwaves, and break the stranglehold on the free flow of ideas, culture, and art." The feeling on the street is the 10% synchronous subversion factor: If enough people go on the air everywhere all at the same time, the FCC can't keep control. We own the airways. Take back access to information. Let a thousand transmitters bloom. Radio power to the people!



Xerography by Monte McCarter/Dissemination Network

BUILDING BETTER BROADCAST NETWORKS

EDIA

Want to form your own radio or TV network? Setting up a network of repeater stations, one station broadcasts the program while the other stations in the network receive it and feed it into their own transmitters to add their extra throw to the broadcast. ArtWaves is a project in San Francisco that involves 20 or more microstations operating in this fashion to blanket the city with free radio. (Contact Mark Cummings at 415-626-2261 for more info.)

Microbroadcasters might even think big and go worldwide, using the FidoNet pass-it-along model. Who needs ABC, NBC, CBS, and CNN?

SHORTWAVE BROADCASTING

Shortwave has two big advantages: you can transmit signals to different parts of the country (and even internationally) and the FCC is less likely to notice you. The easiest way to set up a station is to modify amateur radio transmitters, which operate in the range of approximately 3 MHz to 30 MHz (ordinary AM radio is around 1 MHz, or 1000 kHz). Here are some rough pointers on how shortwavers are DIYing:

- A frequency band is picked that's appropriate for the distance to be reached (signals at different frequencies travel different "skip" distances, which also depend on sunspot and atmospheric conditions). Check out *Popular Communications* for more on this.
- 7410 to 7470 kHz (just above the 40 meters amateur band, allowing for existing transmitters to be tuned) is emerging as the universal pirate radio frequency band (7415 used to be poplular but too many people were being busted there, plus there's interference from the Voice of America, go figure). With sensitive receivers, people can pick up small signals in this frequency range hundreds or even thousands of miles away, especially at night.
- The region above 27 MHz (amateur radio 10 meters and citizen's band) has been largely vacated by police, taxis, truckers, government, etc., many of which have moved up to the 900 MHz band. There's lots of surplus gear available. Sounds perfect.

Transmitter: complete unit

DIY

FM RADIO STATION

Power Meter

1. Constructing a Transmitter. These can be built from scratch with information found at your local library or assembled from kits available from Free Radio Berkeley. They have several different designs available, with transmitting powers from 5 to 30 watts. Power boosters are also available. For music-oriented pirates, there are stereo transmitter and compandor (audio signal compression and limiting) designs. All kits are complete with printed circuit boards, parts, instructions, and circuit diagrams. Prices range from $18 to $40.

The more power, the farther you can transmit. With a one watt transmitter you can probably reach a one mile radius. With a good antenna and transmitting site a 10–15 watt transmitter can cover a city on a clear FM frequency.

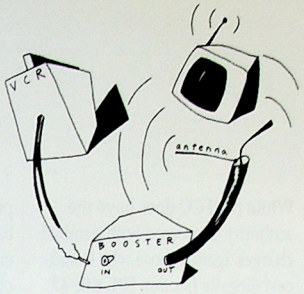
Radio Shack has a simple and inexpensive legal wireless microphone/transmitter ($20, part number 33-1076) that will get you past those pesky public noise ordinances that some communities use to keep unofficial events out of the city green spaces. It transmits and is tuneable over the entire FM spectrum, with an outdoor range of 200 feet. Some people use a booster amp (illegally) to amplify the transmitter signal before it goes to the antenna to give greater range.

INVISIBLE RAVES

Ravers: just show up with your FM pocket radios and earbuds, turn on, tune in, and drop everything. Or use boom boxes all tuned to the rave frequency to create a virtual shredder. For a stereo effect: transmit on two frequencies, with the boxes on the left side tuned to one frequency, et cetera.

Photos by Heide Foley/Illo by Georgia Rucker

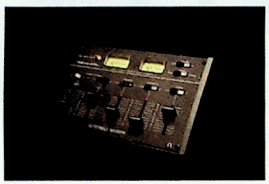
Here are two popular ways people are instantly getting their own TV shows on the air:



1. Using a VCR. Every VCR contains a modulator that converts video signals into the kind of TV signal your television receives. VCRs typically use channels 3 or 4. TVactivists set the VCR switch to the unused channel in their area and connect the RF Modulator output (the jack labelled *To TV*) to a signal amplifier (booster). Then they send the amplified signal to the antenna via coax RG59 cable. Instant Wayne's World!

To broadcast to a wider audience, an amplifier is used. With 100-200 watts, a station can broadcast over a 10-15 mile radius. See Free Radio Berkeley for a three transistor design that puts out 50 watts. For best results, antennas are tuned (cut) for the exact transmitting frequency.

2. Building a UHF Transmitter. All those unused UHF channels can be put to good use and give viewers something more interesting to see than *I Love Lucy* reruns and Spanish soap operas. *Electronics Now* magazine publishes instructions on how to build UHF transmitters. Kits including circuit boards and parts are available for low-power (2.5 watts) UHF transmitters for about $100. See Free Radio Berkeley for a design that is good for 40–50 watts UHF.



Portable Mixer: Field Broadcasting

15 watt Amp & Hackers tool kit

2. Choosing a Frequency. The lower frequencies on the FM spectrum are favored because there's more unused spectrum available and the educational stations use these frequencies with lower power and thus cause less interference. Many microbroadcasters find the region around 89 MHz to be useful. Or they find a station that doesn't broadcast 24 hours a day and take over their frequency when they go off the air.

3. Constructing an Antenna. Antennas are tuned to the broadcast frequency of the transmitter used. This means adjusting or cutting it to the right length (the wavelength corresponding to the frequency chosen). Simple telescoping antennas or single or double TV rabbit-ear-style ones will do the trick, although they're an inefficient design. Rule of thumb for a dipole antenna: element length (in feet) = 234 divided by the frequency in MHz. For mobile operation, an old magnet-mounted CB antenna can be recycled as a good 1/4 wave transmitting antenna by jumping the loading coil.

4. Broadcasting the program. A microphone along with a simple DJ mixer can be plugged into the transmitter and broadcast live from any location and from any event the broadcasters find themselves in. Or tapes can be prepared in advance and simply played into the transmitter at broadcast time. Communites of radio pirates are often formed using the same frequency so their community of listeners can have more material to listen to.

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BUT IS IT LEGAL?

THE PEOPLE'S FCC

The FCC is way out of touch. When pirate media becomes widespread, the FCC will be unable to cope. The People's Free Communications Coalition (People's FCC) is being formed by Free Radio Berkeley as a sort of tribal network of technical and legal experts. Beyond changing the legal status of microbroadcasting, they are working to create a strong national coalition in the face of the big lobbies opposing these changes. "The People's FCC intends to take back the airwaves from the corporate robber barrons and break the stranglehold on the free flow of ideas, culture, and art," says Dunifer.

While the FCC does have the authority to proceed with criminal charges against those who broadcast illegally (section 501, title 47 USC), the usual mode of operation is to go after broadcasters by seizing their equipment (section 510) or by levying fines ranging from $750 to as much as $20,000.

But who's illegal here? The FCC is in flagrant violation of your constitutional right to free speech. The U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and The American Convention on Human Rights all clearly stipulate the right to communicate freely and receive and impart information through any media, regardless of frontiers. The complete ban on low-power micro radio broadcasting is in blatant violation of internationally recognized human rights.

With Stephen Dunifer of Free Radio Berkeley, the FCC has really gone off the deep end. It's filed a Notice of Apparent Violation against Dunifer, with a civil fine of $20,000. Free Radio Berkeley and Stephen Dunifer are being represented by Louis Hiken from the National Lawyers Guild Committee on Democratic Communication in San Francisco.

"This is total censorship, not a regulation. If they wish to give us a way to broadcast with a one watt transmitter, we will be glad to comply," says Hiken.

"FCC licensing requirements are blatantly discriminatory against minorities and low-income people. Micro radio is a way of beginning to empower low-income citizens; it's the voice of the excluded," says Dunifer.

"The pattern the FCC has been pursuing in the last few years is to fine unlicensed radio broadcasters under a scheme that was really designed for corporations that were broadcasting outside of the parameters of their license," he continues. "They were using charts and formulas that deal with major corporations that are not broadcasting within the criteria set within their license. Before a couple of years ago, when these new criteria were established, they had defined a set of fines for unlicensed use that went from $750 up to $1,000. The FCC is like any other policing agency. It makes assertions and assumes that nobody will really question them. We believe that the FCC is going to fold on that particular issue and acknowledge that my fine of $20,000 is really designed for a whole different kind of broadcast violation. It's totally bogus. They have no regulatory authority because they misapplied a regulation intended only for licensed broadcasting We're not paying the fine. We believe the scheme violates the Constitution. I feel the $20,000 thing is a big stick they're trying to wave at people doing this kind of micropower broadcasting in the hope that they'll cave in by intimidation, as Free Radio Detroit did. Not having any extensive worldly assets, I don't give a damn.

"As someone who's been a street activist for over 20 years and has had to deal with situa-

Xeroxography by Monte McCarter/Dissemination Network

tions involving San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley police tactical stormtroopers, frankly, I don't see the FCC as any big threat," says Dunifer, who was an organizer of the 1989 Earth Day shutdown of the S.F. stock exchange and the 1990 demonstration in Orinda CA against George Bush.

"Canada was just asked to make exemptions for low power broadcasting, and they did. It's not like the FCC couldn't do it; Chile is about to do the same thing.

"Judging from the electronic mail I've received just in the last week, there seem to be dozens of people like me out there. I got a call from a man in Texas who runs a 1 watt station, and he hasn't been hassled at all. He runs a professional operation... full studio set-up you'd find in any normal radio station. There are other people running anywhere from 100 milliwatts to 1 or 2 watt stations in their communities. Most of them haven't been hassled. One reason it's difficult to determine how many are out there doing it is because if you broadcast sporadically, the likelihood of being stopped by the FCC is almost non-existent; whereas if you are announcing your broadcasting to a community and you're doing it regularly, you're certain to be approached by them. So how many people are doing it depends more on how they're doing it."

Remember the early days of CB, when the FCC required CB licenses? Hundreds of thousands of people just went on the air. The FCC realized there was no way to regulate all of them and dropped the stupid requirement. The same thing can happen in microbroadcasting. Spread the word.

ELECTRONIC COUNTERMEASURES

WARNING: the FCC uses a vehicle equipped with a phased antenna array to determine the bearing of the suspected transmitter. They drive in that direction for a bit, stop and take another bearing and proceed on that heading till they arrive near the site of the transmitter. If they begin this process in your area, it can take only fifteen minutes to generate a target area from their readings. Then they physically scan the area for suspicious antennas. Apartment buildings with large numbers of occupants and antennas can confuse the issue. Disguised antennas can confuse them further. Using a scanner to monitor relevant frequencies while broadcasting may allow early warning of detection. Varying the time and location of broadcasts can keep the source location a mystery. Remote forested outdoor sites for nighttime broadcasts or bouncing signals off a metallic structure, such as a water tower or metal fence, are possibilities. Other countermeasures involve operating from a moving vehicle, and transmitting from multiple synchronized repeaters (remote transmitters fed by a signal on a different frequency not on the FM band) located inaccessibly—on a mountaintop, a remote island, or the top of an apartment or office building, for instance, timed to broadcast every 15 minutes. Forming a network of synchronized stations in different locations broadcasting one after another on the same frequency (and fed the same program via prerecorded tape or telephone) can keep the bastards driving all around town can overload the repressive system until it breaks down!

Note: the FCC responds to complaints. These usually come from (1) Licensed broadcasters who've had their frequency invaded. These can be avoided by staying out of their way by using free space in the spectrum. (2) Local complaints about interference. Transmitters create harmonics at other frequencies. Filters (to make sure the broadcast signal is clean), usually solve this.

THE 10% SYNCHRONOUS SUBVERSION FACTOR

You've all heard about the SuperBowl Flush phenomenon. Well, all it takes to subvert many institutional systems today is a synchronous selection by only 10% of the system users. Take banks for example. If on any given day at an appointed time, 10% of all depositors demanded their money to be withdrawn in full, the banks could not pay it. Ditto if 10% of citizens did not file income tax returns—the IRS would be swamped with 15 million tax avoiders and would find its staff and computers overloaded and incapable of responding.

—Sir Real

EASTERN BLOCK PARTY TV

It started in 1989. The culprits? A bunch of proto-punkoids—Soviet variety—who lived in the vast exurban sprawl of highrises surrounding Moscow, called Suburova. P.J. O'Rourke once said "Commies love concrete but concrete does not love Commies." He must have been referring to Suburova, with its endless concrete rows of desolate seven story apartment buildings.

Each set of six highrises had a master antenna for picking up the voice of the master, the face of Big Brother emanating from central Moscow's most popular and only TV station, Gosteleradio ("Gos" means State, and "teleradio"... you figure it out). It was here that an unsung people's hero schlepped his black market VHS player into the basement and plugged it into the cable system that runs from the master antenna to each family unit. He popped in a porn movie and *presto*... pirate TV Soviet style was born.

Cut to East Germany some months later, as sledgehammers topple the Wall and politicians, dreaming of future toilet paper markets, celebrate the victory of Capitalism. West German installation artist Ingo Gunther visits the eastern city of Leipzig and arranges to put a Work of Art on the top floor of the former Communist Party Headquarters. The Work of Art is called Pirate TV. It consists of a VHS machine with an adapted RF output (that wiry thing you hook to the TV set antenna screws), hooked to an 8 watt amplifier and to an antenna on the roof made of random metal garbage. Feeding the contraption is a VHS camcorder filming a roomful of lamp-lit dancing 20-year-olds. Like an Eastern Bloc version of *The Box*, Pirate TV station Kanal X is suddenly screaming out on UHF 35 to half of Leipzig.

In Romania, the dreaded Nicolai Ceaucescu is tried for treason and shot by a firing squad. Within 48 hours a small group of electronerds confronts

Xeroxography by Monte McCarter/Dissemination Network

As Executive Director of Internews, Evelyn Messinger is the Johnny Appleseed of pirate radio and TV in Eastern Europe and ex-USSR. Remember Woz's Us festival rock concert in 1982? Internews did the satellite links between Americans and Soviets at that event. It also produced the Beyond War Spacebridges between people in the U.S. and USSR, the 1986 Citizens' Summit (moderated by Phil Donahue in Seattle and Vladimir Posner in Leningrad), and satellite transmission from Armenia after the big quake of '89. Internews can be reached in Arcata, CA at (707) 826-2040.

Evelyn Messinger

FREE RADIO YUGOSLAVIA

MONDO 2000: As the only free broadcasting voice in the former Yugoslavia, what is it that you do?

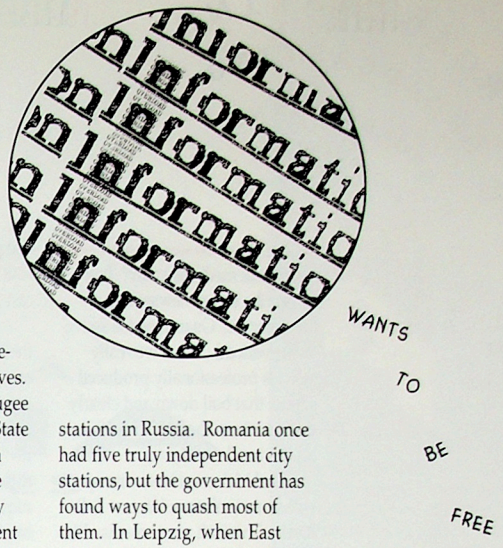
One reason the insane war in former Yugoslavia continues is the daily dose of paranoia and disinformation from the state-backed media. Just like what we got during the Persian Gulf war. Radio B-92 in Belgrade somehow manages to get the truth out. When the government tried to shut it down recently, people threw their radios out the window and revolted. Working around idiotic UN sanctions, I interviewed its Director, Veran Matic, via a pirate Internet e-mail link. —WT

VERAN MATIC: Radio B-92 is a radio of the minorities. In Belgrade, during times of conflict—clashes with the police, demonstrations, etc.—we broadcast the events directly with improvised technical equipment. Because of such broadcasts, the police often disturb our broadcasting, or they simply break into our radio offices and disable us by force.

Radio B-92 is unique for producing parts of its program on the street—instead of sterile radio comments, we do subversive actions. When we warned people about a coming "white plague" as a result of high prices for equipment and baby food, we invited citizens to symbolically give their babies away to President Milosevic, as a "gift." More than two hundred parents with babies showed up in front of the President's Palace. A few days later, the prices of equipment and food were cut down. When the first barricades were set up on the streets of Sarajevo, we blocked one street in Belgrade, to show the citizens how ridiculous barricades are.

We write graffiti around Belgrade all night. We organize news progams in the center of Belgrade, where citizens come to get information. We let the citizens openly curse and threaten President Milosevic. We produce underground rock anthems with the help of the best rock bands. We give away the records for free and organize a promotion on a truck which drives through Belgrade with the musicians playing on it. We organize rock concerts for over 50,000 people, and the

Xeroxography by Monte McCarter/Dissemination Network



the local government with a petition demanding "independent television." The government, which has never had to make a decision before, is frightened by the crowd and signs. Like all Romanian contracts, there is a date on which the agreement begins but no termination date. In a country which had two hours of TV daily (first hour: Ceaucescu's activities; second hour: Ceaucescu's thoughts), there is now Timisoara Free TV from midnight to 6 AM every day. They spend hours interviewing people with VHS cameras, and local rockers drive each month to Vienna to buy trunkloads of concert videos, which are re-edited for local consumption.

In Kharkov, Ukraine , a clever fellow talks the Ministry of Telecommunications into a way to make "millions" —they give him a local frequency; he sets up a satellite dish. Kharkov gets its (pirated) MTV. In Wroclaw, Poland they follow the Leipzig route but build a respectable transmitter themselves. In Shushenskoya, Siberia, refugee electrical engineers from the State Transmission Authority buy a few satellite uplinks, convince ragtag local TV stations to buy dishes and the first independent network in the East—serving only Siberia—signs on.

Today, some of the early master antenna cable systems in Russia have merged—one has 400,000 viewers. Since there is no law against it, there are now hundreds of local broadcast TV stations in Russia. Romania once had five truly independent city stations, but the government has found ways to quash most of them. In Leipzig, when East Germany became part of West Germany, Kanal X went under Western laws. Shortly after those stentorious pronouncements on the victory of freedom and capitalism, Kanal X was forced to shut down. Why? Because pirate TV is illegal in West Germany.

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money we collect goes towards humanitarian aid for Sarajevo.

We publish anti-war stories and give away the books for free. We are directly involved in the organization of student demonstrations. We conduct campaigns for the legalization of cannabis and homosexuality. Sometimes we even organize conversations among Belgrade phone answering machines.

M2: What information are you bringing to the people?

VM: When we do a story about a battle, it's composed of information from both sides, together with info from foreign news agencies. We get information from the militarily isolated regions via radio amateurs. These amateurs also serve as useful mediators when trying to get in touch with war-torn families. As for interviews with political leaders in Croatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina—with whom the telephone links don't exist—we conduct them by phone links via Paris or Milan.

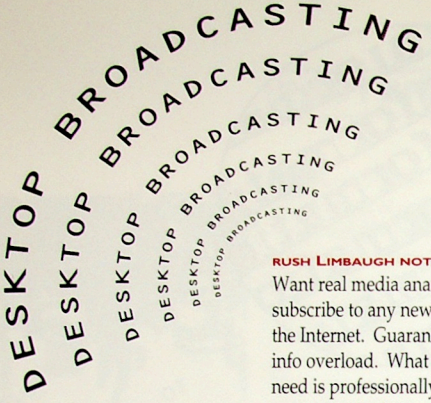
M2: How do you keep from being closed down?

VM: The government is constantly trying to close us down. But we can't be shut down as we are not only a radio station but a movement as well. Even if they close us down by force, we shall broadcast our program on the streets, or we shall go from one apartment to another to inform our citizens, or we shall engage pirate radio stations to broadcast our program. Unlike the 200,000 young people who have left this "crazy country," we are staying. It is up to you to decide how many of us survive and how long we shall be staying.

M2: How can we help?

VM: We are establishing a TV station, so we need TV equipment. We need a press office to publish posters, pamphlets, and publications. We need a computer network and modems so that we could send our information—free of charge—to local media in the former Yugoslavia and Serbia. We need a PA for rallies, demonstrations, and concerts we organize. We need love because we live in the sea of hate. I also need a kitchen sink.

You can help by joining The Friends of B-92, which is lobbying the UN for exemptions to import equipment and supplies for B-92 and a few other independent media in Belgrade. Send $5 or £3 to The Friends of B-92, 12 Milton Court, Ickenham NR, Uxbridge UB10 9BD, UK. Vox: 44-895-635-986. You'll get a newsletter and updates.



RUSH LIMBAUGH NOT SPOKEN HERE

Want real media anarchy? Just subscribe to any newsgroup on the Internet. Guaranteed massive info overload. What we really need is professionally produced media that boil down and clearly communicate the best ideas from all this randomicity.

Carl Malamud has come up with a neat solution: Internet Talk Radio. This isn't pirate media. It's perfectly legal. But it's definitely revolutionary. It's a public news service for the Internet community, professionally produced in the style of NPR's "All Things Considered" and "transmitted" as a series of digital audio files available on the Internet. It reaches some 100,000 listeners in 30 countries, Malamud says. It makes the Internet a whole new broadcasting medium.

The file format is Sun Microsystems .au format (PCM files: 8 bits per sample, 8000 samples per second with a Sun header), but the public-domain Sound Exchange (SOX) program converts .au files for Mac, SGI, PC, etc. Just play the file through your sound card. A half-hour program is about 15 Mbytes.

GEEK OF THE WEEK

A popular radio program on Internet Talk Radio is *Geek of the Week* (technical interviews with key Internet personalities), sponsored by Sun Microsystems and book publishers O'Reilly & Associates. Internet Talk Radio also carries National Press Club luncheons, selected items from NPR satellite feeds, and two NPR shows: "TechNation" and "SoundPrint." As of mid-August, Malamud has produced 50 hours or 1.5 Gbytes of audio files. He's also produced an Internet Town Hall meeting, with "call-ins" simulcast on the Internet and NPR.

Desktop broadcasting gives the listener more control. "Listeners can start, stop, rewind, or otherwise control the operation of the radio station," as Malamud puts it. "We can add a wide variety of different programming techniques. While listening, you might also scroll through a series of Gopher menus that hold more information about the program, or search a WAIS database for a biography of the speakers."

Malumud also wants to carry congressional hearings. And he has a scheme for sending almost-free faxes via Internet. Send e-mail to **tpc-faq@town.hall.org** for more info on this.

INTERNET INFOTAINMENT

What's next? Live broadcasts, Internet TV, and Internet Multimedia. "Multicast groups and videoconferencing tools allow the creation of live shows," says Malamud. "The NPR show was multicast over the Multicast Backbone (MBONE), a series of a few hundred sites on the Internet that have formed a 'virtual Internet' on top of the Internet for videoconferencing. The NPR show was sent out as live audio to these sites all over the world. Since the MBONE is used for videoconferencing, it was possible to have people 'speak' back to their radios: just like a call-in show, but using a computer instead of a telephone.

"Multicasting is a technique where a single piece of data is sent out to many different sites. If two sites are at the end of a pipe, only one copy of the data is sent over the pipe. Once it reaches the end, the data is made into two (or more) copies and sent to the individual sites."

In his very readable *Exploring The Internet: a Technical Travelogue*, documenting his world travels to meet with Internet cognoscenti, Malamud describes multicasting, multimedia electronic mail, and lots of other interesting stuff.

KGBTV

What about Internet TV? Bandwidth and memory-intensive, but do-able! Recently, John Gage of Sun Microsystems freaked a congressional hearing by piping video and audio of their proceedings in real time out onto the Internet worldwide—including Beijing. To underscore the absurdity of export rules, Gage re-aimed an ex-KGB satellite over Washington to demo encrypted data transfer from Russia. He also demoed how pathetically easy it is to tap cellular phone calls by a simple PROM software hack, and he let the stunned congresspersons listen in. Their minds were suitably blown.

You can create your own radio shows and upload them to your system. And announce them on your fave Usenet newsgroup, of course. Or use the Internet to set up your own international broadcasting network by allowing your "local affiliates" to FTP (download) your audio file. You can also go direct to your listeners by simply announcing the FTP-able filename and Internet system address (they log on by typing *ftp <system name>*, change directory, and *get <filename>* to download the program), as with Internet Talk Radio.

GUERRILLA MEDIA RESOURCES

Compiled by Andrew Hultkrans, Kenneth Newby, and Stephen Beck

BULLETIN BOARDS

AMARC

AMARC is the French acronym for the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters—a truly international association dedicated to furthering community and oppositional radio around the globe. Formed ten years ago, AMARC holds world conferences on the global democratization of radio communication and runs a crucial electronic conference on PeaceNet—amarc.radio. This E-conference, with its sister conf. amarc.radiotech, serves as a global bulletin board for oppositional radio and grassroots political movements.

This isn't just a chat board—*shit happens!* A quick scan of the past year's postings reveals an urgent plea from South Africa's Bush Radio, a grassroots station that had its equipment confiscated by the Apartheid Crew, resulting in several swift faxes from AMARC members on their behalf to the United Nations and the South African government.

Beyond community broadcasting news and crises, amarc.radio covers a broad range of topics of interest to the radio rebel. There's lots of stuff on micro radio, from technical tips to political battles.

AMARC also has an extensive bibliography of publications available to the general public, including their newsletter *InteRadio*. Published three times a year, *InteRadio* features news, profiles of radio projects, technical tips, book reviews and info on AMARC activities. They also distribute *A Passion for Radio: Radio Waves and Community* (Black Rose Books, Canada, 1992) edited by AMARC co-founder Bruce Girard. This invaluable book contains the experiences of 21 alternative radio stations in every corner of the globe, written by the stations' founders. Monographs of international AMARC meetings and seminars are also available.

The Sixth World Conference of Community Radio Broadcasters will be held in Burkina Faso, West Africa in early 1995. Check amarc.radio for further schedule information.

To access PeaceNet from the Internet, telnet igc.org and follow the instructions.

AMARC, 3575 St-Laurent Blvd., Suite 704, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 2T7 Vox: (514) 982-0351 Fax: (514) 849-7129 E-mail: amarc@web.apc.org

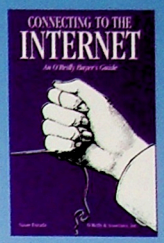
ANARC BBS

The Association of North American Radio Clubs. BBS #: (913) 345-1978. Pirate shortwave programs, scanner reports, legal stuff, and more. The ANARC Shortwave Net on 7240 kHz reports on shortwave pirate and clandestine activity.

The Internet Radio Journal Archives

The Internet Radio Journal Archives contain a

Get Connected



You've read about cyberspace in classics from William Gibson and Bruce Sterling, and in the venerable pages of *Mondo 2000* and *Wired*. It's not science fiction anymore. It's real. It's now. And you, too, want to get connected.

Here are two books on the technology as it exists—a comprehensive introduction to the international network of computer systems called the "Internet." The Internet is more than just a single network; it's the nexus of virtually every computer network in the world. Whether you're a researcher, a student, or just someone who likes to send electronic mail to friends, the Internet is a global resource of almost unimaginable wealth.

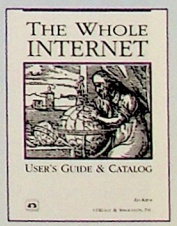
Connecting To The Internet provides practical advice on how to get an Internet connection. It helps you assess your needs and determine the kind of Internet service that is best for you. It describes how to find a local access provider and evaluate the services they offer.

The Whole Internet Catalog & User's Guide covers the basic utilities that you use to access the network (telnet, ftp, email, and news readers). But it also does much more. This guide pays close attention to several important "information servers" (Archie, Wais, Gopher) that are, essentially, databases of databases: they help you find what you want among the millions of files and thousands of archives available. We've also included our own "database of databases"—a resource index that covers a broad selection of several hundred important resources found on the Net, ranging from the King James Bible to the CIA World Factbook.

So if you use the Internet for work or for pleasure—or if you'd like to—these are the books for you. If you've been around the Net for a few years, you'll still be able to discover resources that you didn't know existed.

The Whole Internet User's Guide & Catalog
By Ed Krol, 400 pages, ISBN: 1-56592-025-2, $24.95

Connecting to the Internet: An O'Reilly Buyer's Guide
By Susan Estrada, 1st Edition August 1993, 188 pages, ISBN: 1-56592-061-9, $15.95



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Fax 707.829.0104 • order@ora.com

wealth of info on pirate and community radio, and are available for anonymous FTP from **deja-vu.aiss.uiuc.edu**, in the directory **/misc/rec.radio.b-cast**. All Journals are stored in compressed (.Z) format. Remember to transfer compressed files in the binary mode, not ASCII. At the *ftp* prompt, type the word "binary" (without quotes) and hit return *before* attempting to transfer the files.

Journals are separated into sub-directories based upon issue number. Older Journals are stored 2 or 3 per file, newer ones are stored separately. There is an index file of articles called INDEX (all upper case) which is not compressed.

NIRVANAnet
The Bay Area's own infamous NIRVANAnet BBS family is a good resource for underground pirate radio info, as well as a host of other subjects, ranging from the absurd to the downright incendiary. Recently excoriated in a McCarthyesque fashion by the *Contra Costa Times*, NIRVANAnet is your anarchist cookbook online. "Tips on how to commit fraud, murder, and other mayhem are just a phone call away... courtesy of rabble-rousing electronic bulletin boards that turn the personal computer into a clearinghouse for crime" (Michael Liedtke, *Contra Costa Times*). A more intriguing description is hard to imagine. Check the message subboards of these individual BBSs for pirate radio topix. Most of the message boards are linked, so there is common material in each. &TOTSE has a subboard called "Frequency Freaks," Burn This Flag has "Radio Waves," and realitycheck sports the apparently benign "Atmospherics: Listen to the Radio." All of these subboards contain lively chatter about pirate radio, including tech tips, frequency listings, and transmitting gear for trade or sale. Frequent posters are either currently involved in some kind of pirate broadcasting project, or are knowledgeable enthusiasts seeking willing comrades. Recommended.

Access to the NIRVANAnet boards is free, but to be able to download tasty files you must upload equally tasty files to feed your "download ratio." Or, you can send a five or ten spot to the sysop for unlimited time and download access.

NIRVANAnet numbers:
realitycheck
(Albany, CA)—510-527-1662
New Dork Sublime
(San Francisco, CA)—415-864-DORK (Now 2 lines!)
&TOTSE
(Walnut Creek, CA)—510-935-5845 (Now 2 lines!)
Burn This Flag
(San Jose, CA)—408-363-9766
Lies Unlimited
(San Bruno/So. SF, CA)—415-583-4102
My Dog Bit Jesus
(Berkeley, CA)—510-658-8078
The Shrine
(Sunnyvale, CA)—408-747-0778

MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS

AMARC [*see* BULLETIN BOARDS *above*]

Center for Media and Values
1962 Shenandoah Street, Los Angeles, CA 90034. Vox: 310-559-2944; Fax: 310-559-9396.
PeaceNet:
mediavalue@igc.apc.org.

Media literacy group, encourages reading between the lines. Publishes *Media&Values*, a quarterly review of trends in the media, and *Media Literacy Workshop Kit*, on issues raised in the magazine.

Deep Dish Television
899 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012 Vox: 212-473-8933; Fax: 212-420-8223

Uniting the guerrilla media movement by building an alternative TV network, with 300–500 public-access stations in the US. They welcome video tapes for their twice-weekly broadcasts.

European Radio Programming Bank
Internet: radiopanik@apc.org

AMARC and others use this Dutch tape library as a repository and exchange site.

FAIR—Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting
Subscription Service, PO Box 911, Pearl River, NY 10965-0911, or call 800-847-3993.

A national media watch group fighting back against the mediaspeak techniques of TV, movies, advertising and magazines. Publishes *EXTRA!* magazine bimonthly. Weapons to arm you with knowledge of techniques used by network news, Madison Avenue, and Home Shopping Clubs. Informed analysis and political exposés.

Interkonnexiones
c/o Radio Dreyeckland, Aldest.12, D 7000, Freiburg I.BR, Germany. Vox: 49-761-30-40-8; Fax: 49-761-30-40-7.

A network assisting community programmers. Addresses international solidarity, coöperation, and third world development policy.

Pacifica Program Services—Repository For Tapes
3729 Cahunga Blvd. West, North Hollywood, CA 90019. Vox: 818-506-1077.

Maintains a tape library of community radio programs available for rebroadcast.

Pump up the Volume
1990, 100 minutes.
A movie about a young man's adventures building and operating a pirate radio station in his community.

Spectrum
A shortwave broadcast on the subject of pirate radio on WWCR from Nashville, TN. 7435Khz at 11:35 PM Eastern time, Saturdays.

INTERNET

Internet Talk Radio
For info: send e-mail to **info@radio.com**

rec.radio.broadcasting is a journal on DIY broadcasting. To subscribe: send e-mail to **journal@airwaves.chi.il.us**

USENET newsgroups: **alt.radio.pirate** and **rec.radio.shortwave**

FTP into **dg-rtp.dg.com** with user "anonymous" and password "your e-mail address" for schematics, reviews, stories, info on the popular FM-10 radio transmitter, etc. Send a message with "add address" along with your e-mail address to: **fm-10-request@dg-rtp.dg.com** to add yourself to a mailing list for similar info.

Phrack
A legendary online hack/phreak magazine of interest to the computer underground and phone phreaks. To subscribe, send e-mail to: **listserv@stormking.com** and <*subscribe phrack* Your Name> in message body.

ZINES

73 Amateur Radio Today
Wayne Green, Inc., 70 Route 202–N, Peterborough, NH 03458. Vox: 603-924-0058; Fax: 603-924-9327. Subscription: $24.97/year.

A fun, often controversial zine for amateur radio hobbyists.

2600
Emmanuel Goldstein, Ed. Published quarterly. Newsstand: $4. Yearly subscriptions (U.S. & Canada): $21 individual; $50 corporate. Overseas: $30 individual; $65 corporate. 2600 Subscription Dept., PO Box 752, Middle Island, NY 11953-0752. Vox: 516- 751-2600; Fax: 516- 751-2608. E-mail: 2600@well.sf.ca.us.

The premier hack/phreak zine. Social engineering, circuit diagrams, cautionary tales, tech tips, and rabid First Amendment defense all show up here. Recent articles include: a hands-on technical guide to the 5ESS switch, British credit holes, high school hacking, and a list of government BBSs. 2600 meetings are held all over the country on the first Friday of each month. To start a meeting in your town, leave a message and phone number at 516-751-2600.

A*C*E, The Association of Clandestine Radio Enthusiasts
The ACE PO Box 11201, Shawnee Mission, KS 66207-0201.

Monthly international reports on pirate and clandestine radio and "covert" (spy) material. Subscription: $18/year.

Amateur Radio
WGE Publishing, Forest Road, Box 278, Hancock, NH 03449-0278. Vox: 603-525-4201; Fax: 603-525-4423. Subscription: $25/year, $32 Canada, $44 Foreign, $3 single issue.

Adbusters—Journal of the Mental Environment
The Media Foundation, 1243 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. Canada V6H 1B7. Vox: 604-736-9401.

Deconstructs commercial advertising with "po-mav" (post-Madison Avenue) techniques. Mental ammunition to fight back against the advertising media barrage. Includes clever parodies of famous ads by Absolut, Benneton, McDonalds ("Mickey Dee" as they call it), and the Camel Guy with a condom on his schnozz. A videotape of anti-commercials is also available.

Drop Out Magazine
992 Valencia Street, San Francisco, CA 94110

"The 100 percent true 'zine for indie media-makers."

Nuts & Volts Magazine
T & L Publications, Inc., 430 Princeland Court, Corona, CA 91719. Vox: 909- 371-8497; Fax 909-371-3052. Subscription: $17/year.

A national publication for the buying and selling of electronic equipment, with how-to articles and columns on radio, television, and digital communications subjects. Antenna building and specs, articles on spread-spectrum transmitters, lists of publications related to radio and television including electronic countermeasures.

Popular Communications
$19.95/year. CQ Communications, 76 N. Broadway, Hicksville, NY 11801. Vox: 516-681-2922; Fax 516-681-2926.

Excellent general source. Columns include "Pirate's Den," "Clandestine Communiqué," "Washington Pulse" (tracking the FCC), plus info on scanners, telephones, packet radio, satellite communications, and more.

Popular Electronics
$21.95/year. Gernsback Publications, Gernsback Publications, Inc., 500–B Bi-County Boulevard, Farmingdale, NY 11735. Vox: 516-293-3000; Fax: 516-293-3115.

Consumer electronics construction projects.

QST
American Radio Relay League, Inc., 225 Main Street, Newington, CT 06111. Vox: 203-666-1541; Fax: 203-665-7531. Subscription: $30/year.

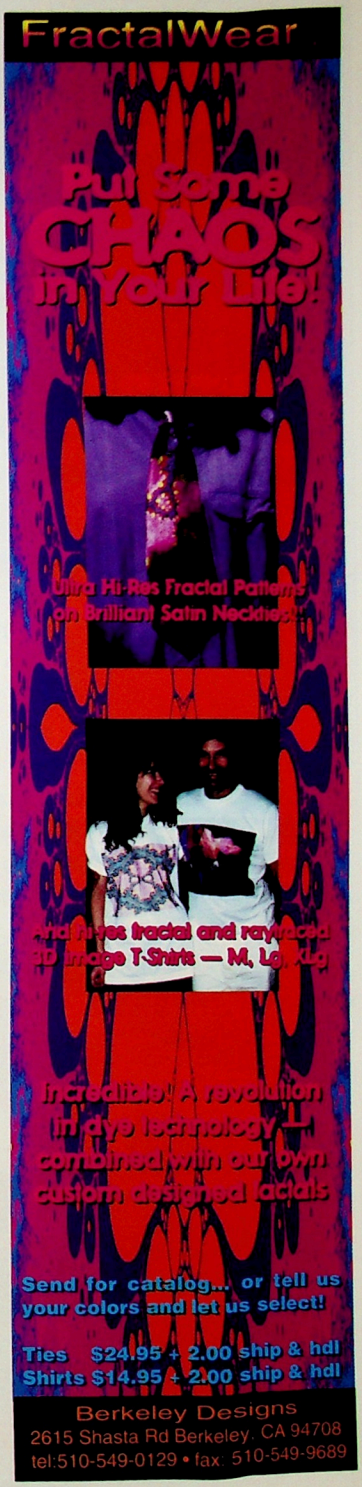
For advanced amateur radio enthusiasts.

Radio-Electronics
Gernsback Publications, Inc., 500–B Bi-County Boulevard, Farmingdale, NY 11735. Vox: 516-293-3000; Fax: 516-293-3115. Subscription: $17.95/year, $2.95 single issue.

Accessible hobbyist zine on radio, video, audio, and computers.

Radio Resistors Bulletin
Frank Haulgren, PO Box 3038, Bellingham, WA 98227. E-mail: **haulgren@henson.cc.wwu.edu**

Goings on in pirate radio circles. Send SASE for sample.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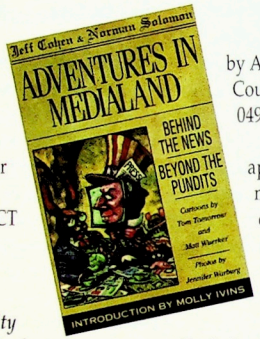
RADIO ACTIVISTS & SOURCES

Free Radio Berkeley
1442-A Walnut St, #406, Berkeley, CA 94709. Vox: 510- 464-3041. stephenpd@aol.com Offers educational info on how to build your own pirate station, kits, amplifiers for radio and television frequencies, circuit boards, and diagrams. Also available are Radio Disks, programs for calculating radio frequency engineering designs. Stephen Dunifer's practical cookbook *Reclaiming the Airwaves* on liberation radio is available for $25 and highly recommended. Other books offered include *Sex and Broadcasting*. Free Radio Berkeley also accepts tapes for broadcast. These are passed on to other interested liberation stations. Free TV Berkeley should be on the air by late 1993. Stephen Dunifer is planning microbroadcasting workshops in Oregon and Washington in October and in New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Washington, DC in November.

Mycal
PO Box 750381, Petaluma, CA 94975. E-mail: **mycal@netacsys.com** Publishes a 35 page packet of info on transmitter and antenna designs, test equipment, etc., especially the FM-10 transmitter. $10 U.S., $12 overseas. Also moderates real-time discussions on the Internet IRC ("FM10" or PIRADIO") channels Mondays 8-12 pm PST.

BOOKS

ARRL Handbook
The technical sourcebook for amateur radio, but applies to other types as well. Published every year by The Amateur Radio Relay League, Newbury, CT Vox: 203- 666-1541.



A Passion for Radio: Radio Waves & Community
Bruce Girard, Black Rose Books. Available from AMARC, 3575 Boulevard St. Laurent, #704, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2X 2T7.

Stories from 21 community radio stations around the globe including native Canadians, Moscow radio, Peruvian community radio, etc. Available in English, French, and Spanish. Also available through Free Radio Berkeley.

Adventures in Medialand— Behind the News, Beyond the Pundits
Jeff Cohen & Norman Solomon, Common Courage Press, 1993 Box 702, Monroe, ME 04951 800- 497-3207.

Attacks the Press's serious failures of omission—the ones that don't hold press conferences and that don't come from "reliable sources." From media control of political parties to nuclear testing and tobacco industry smoke screens, bogus history, and right-wing mind control agents like George Will who censor non-PC voices. Eye-opening, great cartoons.

Chronicles of Dissent—Noam Chomsky
Interviews with David Barsamian, Introduction by Alexander Cockburn, Common Courage Press, Box 702, Monroe, ME 04951 800-497-3207.

Interviews since 1984 on new applications of the propaganda model, the propaganda system, elite power and the responsibility of intellectuals, state economic planning, and more. "Chomsky at his most accessible."

Exploring the Internet — A Technical Travelogue
Includes meetings with remarkable digital cognoscenti. Carl Malamud, Prentice Hall, 1993. (See review on page 34.)

The Internet Companion — A Beginners' Guide to Global Networking
Tracy LaQuey & Jeanne Ryer, foreword by Al Gore, Addison-Wesley, 1993. Excellent intro, very readable how-to.

Media Control— The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda
Noam Chomsky, Open Magazine Pamphlet Series. PO Box 2726, Westfield, NJ 07091 Vox: 908- 789-9608.

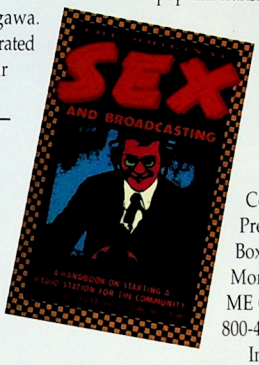
Examines propaganda, mind control, and behavior modification that result when government and business use image manipulation and disinformation to influence events. Cites examples from the Gulf War to illustrate cases of history falsification and spectator democracy.

ROAR! The Paper Tiger Television Guide to Media Activism
1991, $10, Paper Tiger Television Collective,

PanAxis Productions
PO Box 130, Paradise, CA 95967.
Vox: 916-534-0417.
BBS: 916-534-9002.
Another good source for micro-powered radio kits, designs, and info. Call for catalogs, $2.

Pirate Media in Canada
There's been a groundswell of pirate activity in Vancouver at the prompting of Japanese free-radio activist Tetsuo Kogawa. Look for artist-driven, liberated television there in the near future. Contact: Robert Kozinuk, Western Front, 303 East 8th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. Canada V5T 1S1. Vox: 604-876-9343, Fax: 604-876-4099.

Ramsey Electronics, Inc.
793 Canning Parkway, Victor, NY 14564. Vox: 716-924-4560, Fax: 716-924-4555.
Good source for FM-10 and other popular transmitter kits.



339 Lafayette St. NY, NY 10012. Vox: 212-420-9045 or PO Box 411271, San Francisco, CA 94141, Vox: 415-695-0931.
How to take control of your TV and radio. Note "Mutiny on the Airwaves: How to be a Radio Pirate" chapter. Includes good reading list and resource guide.

Seizing the Media
Immediast Underground, Version 1.2. Open Magazine Pamphlet Series. PO Box 2726, Westfield, NJ 07091. Vox: 908- 789-9608.
How mass media sells public attention to corporate advertisers. A blueprint for radical action, including a national public media network.

Sex and Broadcasting—A Handbook on Starting a Radio Station for the Community
Lorenzo Milam, MHO & MHO Works, 4th edition 1988. PO Box 33135, San Diego, CA 92103. Vox: 619-280-3488.
The classic handbook for setting up your own community radio station.

Stenographers to Power—Media & Propaganda
David Barsamian, Common Courage Press, 1992 Box 702, Monroe, ME 04951 800-497-3207.
Interviews with Noam Chomsky, Ben Bagdikian, Alexander Cockburn, and others. How does the media constrain democracy in the United States? Lays to rest any claim that the media exist to further the causes of democracy and justice by informing the public.

Sultans of Sleaze—Public Relations and the Media.
Joyce Nelson, Common Courage Press, Box 702, Monroe, ME 04951 800-497-3207.
Dissects the mirage behind which companies and government hide their lies and deeds.

The Whole Internet User's Guide & Catalog
Ed Krol, O'Reilly & Associates, Inc., 1992, 376 pp. Best Internet how-to book we've seen and the only one with specific procedures for accessing newsgroups and lists.

Zen and the Art of the Internet
Brendan P. Kehoe, Prentice Hall, 1992. A good brief intro. M2

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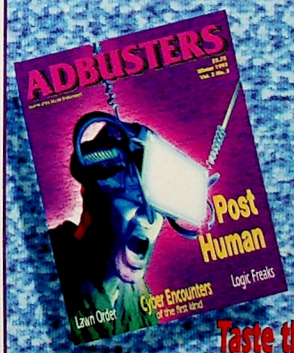
We will jam the pop culture marketeers — Time Warner, Sony, MTV — and bring their image factories to a sudden, shuddering halt.

On the rubble of the old media culture we will build a new one, with a non-commercial heart and soul.



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RoboFest 4

Carnival of Junk

by Paco Xander Nathan

"Seven years from the Millennium and where are our robots?!? Thousands of wonderful arms, wheels and sensors... but still no robot brains. Maybe we like robots better in '93 because we can't have them in real life. If today's robot could politely and unquestioningly obey its human's orders... if it were really worth even half of what a painted tin Thunder Robot is worth now, then any robotic street sweeper, doorman or nanny would probably be beaten sensorless and carjacked by a gang of human unemployables. It's a long ways back to yesterday's tomorrows, ladies and gentlemen."

—Bruce Sterling, keynote speech at RoboFest4

Illustration by John Borruso

GIZMOID PALETTE

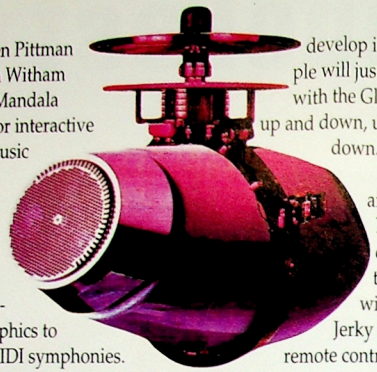
May 22–23, 1993. Sterling quit chasing tornadoes in West Texas long enough to address the fandom of machinery. Kind words to rant about why today's tinmen suck—and why we love them anyway. It's Austin's RoboFest in its fourth annual incarnation.

Once inside, my sensorium is bombarded by flying sculptures, dancing servos, and interactive digital video arrays—four entire auditoriums of the stuff. All the lights, colors, music, banging and clanging spring from Austin's infamous Robot Group, a cabal of artists and engineers bolstered by Austin city funds to produce a technoid sea change for audiences of children at mostly lower income science magnet schools. And, OK, there are a lot of adults hanging out too...

"I expected to see more polish, less wires—you know, like robots in the movies" one visitor was heard to say. Indeed, RoboGroupies really have a different media here, using gizmos as a kind of "found art" palette—rough but expressive—like GWAR on a PC board. Their *gomi-no-sensei* gadgets perpetually break, fracture, convulse pitifully on the floor. But kids enjoy seeing machines in spasm... maybe that's the point.

GADGETS GALORE

TVs in the Net: a basketball gym coöpted for the "music stage" has monitors appropriately dunked in all its hoops. Marcos Novak & company of Liquid Architecture fame run an interactive space built from live sod, dangling weights and computer-networked home appliances.



Karen Pittman and John Witham demo a Mandala system for interactive video/music where a dancer's moving image blends with computer graphics to trigger MIDI symphonies. Craig and Charlene Sainsott play roadies for their Robot Band, a marching band of eager, colorful Tom Servo's performing like some hallucinogenic, industrialized Disneyland theater.

Dave Demaris unveils a neural net-based chaotic system for generating music, while James McCartney guides visitors into the virtual world of PowerGlove music: "People with musical experience will actually work with the phrase shape and try to develop it; other people will just stand there with the Glove and go up and down, up and down."

Down the aisle, Tim Deagan draws away their crowds with "Mr. Jerky Man" a remote controlled servo skeleton that entrances kids with twisted, cybernetic Dias de los Muertos gyrations. Rodrigo Perez-del-Rio Ceballos projects off a piezo-electrically wired soap canister, linked to ambient sound: "On the bottom there's an array of crystals that make a column of sound, roughly vertical. You arrange them to play at different amplitudes so you can get sculptures on the surface of the fluid."

Glenn Currie helps youth pilot DIY telepresence projects—RC model vehicles with radio transmit Pixelvision cameras. Robot blimps wander aloft, people queue half the length of an auditorium to take turns flying on a plywood hovercraft. Speakers disclose how to build systems at home. Liquid Mice take the stage as their lead roboticist Brooks Coleman literally auctions off all his wares for food money before a bewildered audience...

CYBERNETIC OBERMIND

At a private party between shows, we stand agog before a wall-sized drawing, a literal mandala of current robotic research efforts, including a blueprint plan for developing a semi-autonomous android. Recent efforts have led to a modular, mobile platform for developing new bots, and roboticists from around the country flock to see what Austin has brewing.

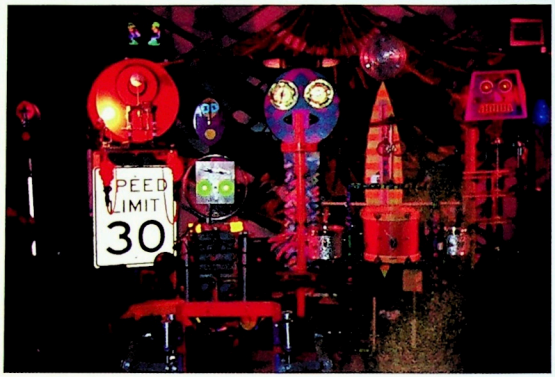


Photo by Monte McCarter; illustration by John Barrasso

Liquid Mice are in Your Head

by Jon Lebkowsky

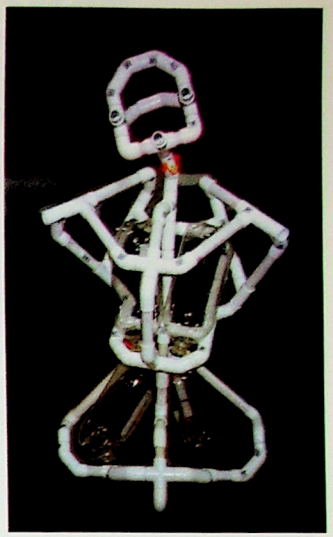
Providing aggressive entertainment for RoboFest4 attendees was Liquid Mice, Austin's favorite robot jazz commune. Liquid Mice make as much sound as possible with *junk*—they hail from the kingdom of found instruments. Imagine a supergroup featuring Steve Cropper, Duck Dunn, Sun Ra, and Karlheinz Stockhausen, with effects by Mark Pauline and vocals by Flora Purim. They've been playing Austin for ten years, since the days of the Art Co-op (ArC), a residential co-op in which artists and musicians crammed into tight spaces to create mutant audiovisual environments based on chaotic evolution.

The band has been using handmade, usually faulty equipment for their whole career, and they've been hauling huge piles of cybernetically enhanced junk from gig to gig—these being Brooks Coleman's infamous robot sculptures and tweak machines. Twelve-foot speakers driven by six inch jamboxes, icicle machines, a harmonic bicycle-driven bellows that would smoke a cigarette, an oil drum projector device that thunders volcanic decibels. Gizmo boxes, turntables, found objects... they're now trying to make the show portable.

One gig is affectionately remembered by the band as "The Night Brooks Gave All His Instruments Away," his motives less altruistic, perhaps, than expedient. Robot instruments can be *heavy*, and hauling them can be

The Robot Group is comprised of a loose, amorphous array of volunteers, whose best laid plans tend to fuck up: power spikes fried circuits on an hourly basis, and Brooks Coleman's showcase "Pneumatic Pit Bull" fatally hypertensed after mistakenly being fed a high-pressure air hose. Perhaps, I mused, a metaphor for our culture?

This year's show was executed better than previous events, though, partly because EFF-Austin members turned out to move the generators, platforms and hydraulic tonnage, and set up an Internet demo, including Doug Barnes' RoboMOO which was heavily attended from outside Austin physpace.



Kids enjoy seeing machines in spasm... maybe that's the point

Photos by Monte McCarter

Long-hairs, subversives, tricked out beyond the audacity of the most rabid raver—these robo-folks aren't exactly TRW executive material. If it takes a little less left-brainedness and a bit more attention to artistic expression to actually advance robotic technology, then hail and welcome Eris Robotica! M2

The Robot Group
PO Box 164334
Austin, TX 78701
(512) 463-3887
alex@mu.sps.mot.com
ai.pittman@mcc.com

Brooks Coleman

deranged... so he gave 'em away to members of the audience. He kept the names of the recipients, and he keeps in touch sufficiently well to know that two of the instruments have been ripped off, including a bicycle-driven bellows he'd created that would smoke a cigarette. This particular piece was unusual for Brooks, sez Herman, because it made mellow, harmonic sounds, unlike the cacophonous industrial-wreckage simulators or the oil-drum projection device that was "the loudest thing in the Universe."

Today Brooks is feeling practical. "We're containerizing," he sez, finding portable ways to do kinetic sculpture "so we won't give it away just 'cause we don't

wanna carry it." The answer is to build smaller gizmos, but no less interesting. The Mice play against the rhythms of these devices, which serve as rhythmic strange attractors in the chaotic performance structures, motifs hidden in apparent randomness.

"Industrial" is a literal component of the Liquid Mice meme, at least when they're in a more structured mode. At one performance they were stamping out badges for the audience while playing their version of the "industrial" jam. Says Len, "There is a form in the industrial process that is a beautiful thing... it's not always the corporate nightmare that we ingest, then puke out." The emphasis is on aesthetics rather than meaning—a new prominence being given to the visual aspect of the performance.

Do Liquid Mice feel greater affinity for jazz than for other styles of contemporary music? The response varies: in jazz, there's a respect for tradition on the one hand, but there's revolutionary experimentation on the other, they coexist. Same thing in this band. Kurtis D is on the edge of funk and punk sensibilities, he doesn't care about jazz one bit: "Charlie Parker's okay, but he's no Henry Rollins!" Or, as Brooks says, "You can take the A-Train and shove it!" Len likes the immortal Sun Ra, but his best and worst album is by Leonard Nimoy, which he calls "pop superficial hardcore garbage."

> "You can take the A-Train and shove it!"

When Sun Ra is mentioned, respect is evident throughout the band. Liquid Mice is, says Sheelah, a kind of "white trash version of Sun Ra's Omniverse Arkestra." As with Sun Ra, it takes courage to play with the Mice, not just anybody can do it. "It's hard to get somebody to join a band where everything's not nailed down," says McCartney. Marchione adds that the band avoids "getting nailed down by the sonata-allegro form (ABA, ABA) that dominates many songs to this day. Liquid Mice never play any of that stuff."

If Liquid Mice has a problem, it's venue. It's tough to get gigs in Austin if you don't play blues or country, there's no consistent venue for gonzo avant-garde performance art. Imagine walking into a fern bar on Sixth Street (the scene of Austin's nightlife) and finding this weird assortment of musicians and machines churning through a performance of "Theologica Circularis." Or a performance like the one at X/XX Experimental Music Festival, organized by the Mice themselves. At X/XX, the Mice did what they call "audience commotion," where they wander around and freak out the audience before they go onstage. Sheelah emerges from behind the audience with a shroud. She wears white Japanese bhuto makeup and drags a vast blue 1952 prom dress. She wanders before the audience and removes the shroud. Completely naked, she straps on a robot arm from inside a briefcase, and with a mechanical monkey on her back, kneels and scrubs the floors, singing a folk song in Tagalog, a Filipino dialect.

But then she evolves. As instruments play a meditative drone, she gives birth to herself, slithering into a bright blue cheesy 1952 prom dress, a blonde wig and big white gloves. As she emerges they start riffing swing-time, the opening notes of the song "Sun Ra." She chants, and gets the audience to join [*shrill midwestern schoolmarm voice*] "...now repeat after me: if you are a good boy or girl, you will go to heaven... if you eat all of your dinner, then you may have dessert..." and she does this whole chant, a hack on conditioning, and by the end of the chant, the audience is saying things like "if you get your MBA, you can work for a *niiiice* corporation." From "Sun Ra" they take off, the music takes over, there's a performance with the robots, and Brooks' wall of gizmos creates a background of ambient robosquawk sound.

> We're a white trash version of Sun Ra's Omniverse Arkestra

Austin's nascent rave scene has become a performance circuit for the Mice. Though Herman says "the smart drugs haven't worked," raves otherwise provide the perfect venue for cyberpunk madness. Cyberpunk? The Mice disavow any intentional correlation with the cyberpunk meme, but acknowledge an affinity. The band's always been into electro-acoustical hacking, and the robots have added cyberedge to the performances.

And where did the robots come from? "My personal reason for doing the robots," says Brooks with a wicked grin, "is I keep trying to replace all the band members."

The band:
Kurtis D: Bass
Herman Garcia: Guitar
Brooks Coleman: Drumz, Cyberthings
Joseph Marchione: Horns
Leonard Smith: Trumpet, Effects
Sheelah Murthy: Vocals,Performance
James McCartney: Percussion, Synthesizers

Liquid Mice have a full length cassette entitled Aqua Rodentia, *containing songs from their soon to be released CD, and additional bonus tracks. To order, send a check or money order for $7.50 (postage paid) to Liquid Mice, c/o Monkey Boy Records, PO Box 8046, Austin, TX 78713. For more information, call the Liquid Mice hotline: (512) 495-9758*

Brooks Coleman

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HAL
"DANGER WILL ROBINSON"

WELCOME TO THE MACHINE: CLEVER HANS AND HIS EXPERT SYSTEMS FUTURE

BY DAVID TURIN

ILLUSTRATION BY ERIC WHITE

Hans Moravec is a robotics hacker; he builds machines that do things. Moravec thinks about what the machine wants to do, and tries to find a way to let the thing crank. In his classic Stanford thesis project, he replaced a mobile robot's video eyes with the ultrasonic range-finder chirpers used by auto-focussing cameras—and all of a sudden the robot could *make tracks*.

One of Moravec's college teachers recalls him as "Clever Hans. He's a true hardcore mechanist: someone who'd kill himself if there were a proof that machines can't be the same as people."

Moravec has been at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh for years now, spending Navy grants for developing mobile robots, and occasionally doing private contract work to produce such things as robotic watchmen for warehouses. There exists a video of Moravec and his students in the back of a huge bread-van that is slowly trundling along an asphalt path. The robotics hackers are hunched over a computer screen in the back of the truck, and there's nobody sitting up front. The computer is driving the truck. Some nut steps out in front of the truck—and the truck stops!

Moravec's 1988 book *Mind Children* featured cool rants, a bitchen cover, and such arcana as William Gosper's "hashlife" pyramid technique for cosmic-sized updates of artificial life simulations.

In his forthcoming book, *The Age of Mind*, Moravec is rumored to have shifted his focus from information mechanics to taxes and the economy. If you thought the Terminator was a mean machine, how would you like to meet a robotic Taxman?

—Rudy Rucker

He projects a certain nerdish benignancy, but he's rife with contradictions. He's married to an evangelist though he is himself an atheist. He's published articles in serious journals on pigs in cyberspace and time travel and computing. You get two senses—that he wouldn't hurt a fly, and that he would tear it apart to see how it worked.

Hans Moravec was born in Kautzen, Austria in 1948 and moved to Canada when he was five. At that time he built robots of rubber bands and tin cans and batteries. Later he built small electronic turtles that could follow light patterns. [*In college HM put flies into a cup wired to high voltage and chuckled when they flew between the leads and vaporized.*]

Working for his Ph.D. at Stanford under John McCarthy—one of the patriarchs of Artificial Intelligence—he built a robot that could negotiate obstacle courses using TV eyes. With the publication of *Mind Children* in 1988, he emerged as an AI researcher who saw technology as *the Medium of Evolution*. The book, published by Harvard U.P., predicted that—soon—humans, thoroughly exasperated by their physical limitations, would download themselves into computers and become immortal.

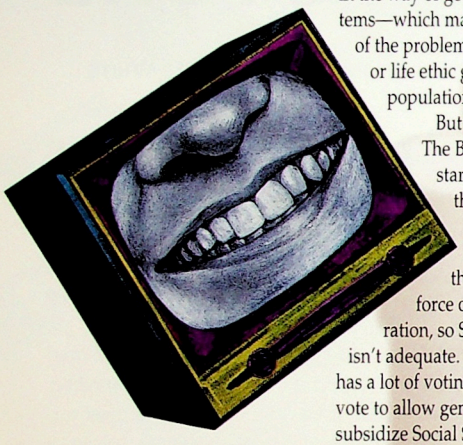
In his new book, *The Age of Mind*, Moravec envisions a world reorganized by technology and human instinct, in which humans live in tribes while machines run the economy. There's a personal bias in his vision: he *wants* his re-lapsarian world where artificial super-intelligences will shepherd us, provide for us, and *insure* that labor becomes leisure.

—David Turin

HANS MORAVEC: There are so few jobs left, there's no serious possibility that you'll find work in any field at *all*. When you get fully human-competent robots, why use a person? Who wants to deal with rest breaks and shifts and wages, when a robot will work day and night for a few watts?

MONDO 2000: But 50 years? Isn't that far too soon?

HM: I think there will be resistance from humans. That's why I have a scenario which I think allows it to happen on the right time scale. It would be very uncomfortable if work ethic gets in the way of government systems—which may have been one of the problems in the 1930's—or life ethic gets in the way of population control.



But here's the plan. The Baby Boomers start retiring, but there are too many of them to be supported by the reduced work force of the next generation, so Social Security isn't adequate. But the Boom has a lot of voting clout. They vote to allow general funds to subsidize Social Security.

Now because the fully automated companies are very profitable, you can tax them in all sorts of ways—property taxes, value-added taxes, plus income taxes of course. That goes into Social Security. The work force keeps shrinking as older workers retire early—because they've been trained for things that machines can now do. So the natural thing is simply to lower the retirement age and just start subsidizing those people as retirees even though they're going to be around for decades—with medical advances, maybe longer!

M2: Are you talking about white collar jobs as well as blue collar jobs?

HM: Absolutely. In fact, some of the major shrinkage of this decade is white collar jobs—middle management getting squeezed out by office information systems.

MACHINERAL: SIC! SIC!

M2: I'm quite concerned about what will happen to *investment banking*...

HM: Well, that's almost a pure information-processing plus decision-making role. Many credit decisions—even loan officer decisions—are being made by expert systems. The first role for them was approving credit card purchases. Everybody has expert systems nowadays, or neural networks trained to detect fraudulent or imprudent use. The trainable systems get very, very good because you train them with huge databases. Most people won't have the experience that these things effectively have. They develop an intuition that's *better* than human. So financial decisions will be more and more machineral [*sic*] because human decisions wouldn't be as good. And the other part of banking operations is just filing papers.

M2: If machines were to replace humans in these companies, what would happen to the revenue generated by the companies?

HM: The companies are wonderfully profitable. Soon you'd have no money in human hands—these factories' products would pile up in warehouses and their profits would pile up in banks. It would be this constipated system...

M2: And the taxes act as a laxative?

HM: Well, as a reflexive free marketer, I was bothered by this. There are other proposals. For instance, make the population of the earth the owners of these factories and let them collect the dividends—but that's hard to equalize. And there's really no need, because the main advantage of capitalism is the incentive it provides to work efficiently and simply eliminate things that don't work. So if the humans can't contribute anyway—not to the decision making, not to the actual production—the incentives should be put where they'll have some effect... which is on the machines themselves. These companies should be in a hyper-capitalistic system. They should be constantly competing with each other, looking for products that humans will buy so that they can survive to pay their taxes against the other corporations.

"IT'S ALL RIGHT, WE TOLD YOU WHAT TO DREAM"

HM: It's really a science fiction cornucopia. The retirement age drops and drops until finally it reaches birth...

M2: So at birth you're a free man.

HM: Or you're a very expensive one, by some points of view.

M2: Oh, I get it: "original sin" becomes "original debt."

HM: [*Undaunted*] But there are further implications to this. These companies are competing like crazy with each other—and to remain competitive you've got to become smarter than your competition. So these things become superhuman very rapidly, without humans to gum up the works.

M2: But who's keeping the machines in check?

HM: How do you stop them from deciding, "Well, we don't really need these humans. We're living fine"? I think the answer is to build in a thing that you could call Corporate Law, evolved from current laws on corporations. Basically, you have a conditioning system which internally rewards and punishes the entity according to the outcomes of its actions—or the *simulated* outcomes, when it's in planning mode. So you build in these laws which basically say "Don't do this. Do that."

YOU HAVE VIOLATED ROBOT'S RULES OF ORDER...

M2: Corporate law forms the basis of their morality?

HM: It's more fundamental than morality—it's like your need to eat when you're hungry. Its *basic drives* will be the corporate laws. This will be very, very strange. And among those laws there should be antitrust laws, that corporations can't collude among themselves... and that if one grows too large, it has to split. Occasionally, by accident or malice, something will go wrong with one of these things' motivational apparatus and it will become crazy or dangerous. So you include some police provisions in the Corporate Law so that the other ones can gang up on the rogue. And if you have diversity—that none of them are too big—that's a fairly safe system. To make sure that the Corporate Law's working, though, there's got to be a long period of fine-tuning.

M2: Under human supervision.

HM: Yes, that's right. There's a complication here. Humans would be able to buy almost anything they want. They can reformat themselves medically, make themselves more beautiful, or stronger or smarter. In principle they could also buy robotic augmentations or complete downloads.

...AND MUST EXIT THE PLANET IMMEDIATELY

In fact, humans could augment themselves to the scale of the corporations, but since they don't have Laws, that would be very dangerous. Now, if you tried to outlaw that, some people would be strongly motivated to do it, and when they're discovered there would be some real major unpleasantness. It's hard to imagine a clash between super-intelligences. It could be fairly scary. So—I don't think you can allow that. On *Earth*.

I think what you *can* do is create an escape clause which says, "All right, you can augment yourself beyond these limits, become something other than human, but to do so you have to give up your vote, give up your subsidized income, give up your residency on Earth—essentially, give up your entitlements as a human being—and *leave*. Out in the solar system, it's a wild frontier. You can do what you want, live or die by your own wits. We'll even give you a grubstake to get started—a robotic luxury-type grubstake—and the capability to expand yourself—but we on Earth basically will have nothing more to do with you.

CIVILIZATION & ITS MALCONTENTS

M2: So you get rid of the rogue humans. But what about those humans who *like* to work?

HM: Well, that's fine. There's no reason that they can't. What I'm proposing is that—civilization is actually very unnatural. It started by solving problems around organizing thousands of people—how to get that many people to work together without interfering with each other—when in fact our natural tendency is to live in tribal villages of about 200.

But it means that we have to push human adaptibility to its edge, even a little beyond. Basically, we have a range of behaviors, but sometimes we have emergencies: we have to work really hard or have to travel because the food isn't growing, or we need to fight the next village because together we're drawing on the ecology too strongly. [!!!] We *can* do that for a while, but civilization seems to work by making that kind of emergency situation chronic. The reason the work ethic has to be instilled over a period of years is because it's so unnatural. Of course we have many advantages—nutrition, cleaner conditions... and our longevity is way higher.

MACHINES WILL NOW DRESS FOR DINNER

M2: But maybe civilization is the only way we can relate to nature. Negating civilization means we won't relate at *all*...

Earth is this incredibly boring place, just for those that don't have the guts to leave

HM: Well, we won't, of course, but the *machines* will be there. The machines will be civilized, and technological beyond your imagination. But it means that we, just on a day-to-day basis, can set up our relationships as we find them comfortable. So we don't have to live in cities. There's no economic advantage to a city anymore. Also the concept of a nation is no longer that useful. So I think what probably will happen is tribalization. People will just find people that they either grew up with or like to interact with—because tribes can be over communication links. Communication will be fabulous. You'll have virtual realities... But you probably won't naturally have very large

tribes—somewhere on the order of a couple hundred people interacting. Of course some people will still seek fame or want to travel or enjoy going tribe to tribe.

M2: Some sci-fi writer is going to make a bundle off your concept.

HM: That's right. But I'm also thinking of starting a company...

CYBER SWAT, CYBER SWARM

M2: Corporate law keeps machines in line. What keeps the *people* in line?

HM: The machines. These machines are really clever. They have consumer research divisions in which they model human psychology to plan their products, to plan their advertising campaigns. And they can actually manipulate human behavior by inside nudges. They're smarter than us so they can herd us like we herd toddlers.

With scanning tunneling microscopes in your fingers you could manufacture things out of thin air

But occasionally there will be a toddler who wants to smash that lamp, regardless. And then, force is possible. But force can be really subtle: you have robots that are incredibly cheap to make in any quantity, in any size or shape, of arbitrary strength and intelligence... and they just stand in the way, willing to sacrifice themselves without a thought. The sort of large-scale violence you have now really isn't necessary. If you can put ten policemen around the person that's about to do something wrong, you can pretty much prevent most things from happening without being overly coercive on anybody else or causing any collateral damage.

M2: But what happens to healthy iconoclasm, healthy dissent?

HM: Well, after describing all this, then *I* go to where my heart really lies, which is out there where things are wild and woolly, unconstrained. Earth is this incredibly boring place, just for those that don't have the guts to leave. And out there there are no rules. I'm trying to figure out how things will settle out—and I think things will be moderately peaceful.

M2: What happens to the fine arts in this world?

HM: I assume that the diversity of what humans do will be greater than ever, with tribalization. The homogenizing effects of civilization will be gone, so you're going to have tribes going off in very bizarre directions because they won't be constrained by the need to make a living. People just revert to their instinctive ways. Basically, we can all be idle rich.

POSTCIVILIZED COMBAT

M2: Charlie Chan once said: "Freedom is beautiful, but sometimes it crawls right up your ass and kills you."

HM: Well, I'm sure there will be individuals who won't find their niche in this kind of world. But a lot of people really like structure—we're sort of wired that way.

M2: Your vision is one in a continuum of male patriarchal views of progress. What if women get more voting power and stop financing these kinds of dreams?

HM: I mean, I view things in terms of ecological niches and the traditional female role—which is nurturing and raising the children...

M2: That's been imposed by men.

HM: But has it? It makes sense to have a specialization of effort. Raising children really is a big job, a full-time job, and it's not compatible with going all over the place into dangerous situations. So somebody sits on the nest, basically, and somebody goes out to fetch the worms. But on the other hand, sometimes the whole tribe migrates.

M2: Tribes, shmibes—I'm saying, what if everything starts to effeminate? Wouldn't that thwart the masculation of your vision?

HM: Er... I'm not sure the whole dichotomy of the male and female is very meaningful—at least it hasn't compelled itself in my thinking...

M2: That's what I MEAN!

NOBLESSE SAUVAGE

HM: It doesn't seem very male, the world I'm talking about. It's really ecological. In fact I draw a parallel with the kind of life that these new tribes have with Yanamamo tribes in Brazil. They don't seem to have any tribal hierarchy. They live in these small villages—about 200 people—so that everybody knows everybody else, knows whether to trust them or avoid them. And there's no male dominance, apparently. And there are no large projects undertaken that require someone to lead. Compared to civilization, it's incredibly lazy.

Three years ago, a self-appointed representative of one of the Yanamamo villages simply went out—he was obviously more of a go-getter than average—on a tour asking civilization to please stop messing with them, stop bringing in disease and tearing up their land looking for gold. He had comments about civilization—"These people are all crazy. They're interested in cars, and work really hard, not having any time for the important things—your family, nature. There's no forests here at all—I'd die within a month in this place." And I think that's exactly right. We're really at the edges of what our psychology can embrace. That's why people complain so much, even though the statistical measures of our well-being are all very high. It's as if we were having to live our lives walking on a tight rope, a bear walking on its hind legs. It's not satisfying our basic urges.

THE BASIC URGE TO BECOME A ROBOT TREE

M2: People would download themselves into robot trees?

HM: The basic idea is that if we have dexterity because we have fingers on our arms, we'd have even *more* dexterity if our fingers had

fingers. And if those were all individually controllable then the data rates at which you'd be able to affect the world would be vastly, vastly higher. You'd be able to do a thousand or a million or a billion or a trillion things all at once. And in fact, as you get smaller the intrinsic speed goes up. So if you're a billion times smaller, you're also a billion times faster. So the effective data rate—multiply the number of fingers by the number of times they affect the world—is astronomically high, like nothing that's ever existed before. In fact, with scanning tunneling microscopes in your fingers you could manipulate individual atoms, in bulk quantities, so actually you could—this is a really extreme thing—you could manufacture things out of thin air by assembling them on an atomic basis.

MATHEMATICAL AWE

M2: And what would that do to the human soul's progress?

HM: I don't even know what that means. I mean, I think of our minds as a finite problem-solving process with certain inclinations that allow us to learn. But certainly the understanding of the nature of the universe should be greater than ever before. This could generate what you might recognize as spiritual concepts which are far more developed than anything our minds are capable of.

M2: What would happen to the body of knowledge that has come from meditation?

HM: Well, I'm sure it would be encoded; entire human personalities, human mental histories, will be in the data banks—which will probably be looked at as human tinker toys by things that are much more intelligent. They'll be able to understand why you have these religious feelings. So there will be some things thinking this kind of thought—whether you'd call it spirituality or mathematics is probably premature at this point.

A lot of people really like structure—we're sort of wired that way

CLEVER HANS, SILLY SEX

M2: Do you envision anthropomorphic robots before robot trees?

HM: There probably is a market for humanoid-shape robots. Disney already employs quite a few. There are social functions they could perform. You'll probably have some robots, for vestigial, historical reasons, being built in the shape of humans.

M2: And sex?

HM: I was kind of skipping over that actually. Sure, why not? The only thing is, it's going to get some stiff competition from things like virtual reality, which might be even better because you can control more parameters. You don't have the constraints you have with an actual physical thing shaped like a person. In VR you can simulate in a way that's just richer.

M2: And do the downloaded ones, the robot trees, have sex?

HM: No. Sex is indeed one way to get diversity into genetic shuffling, but culture is better than sex because you can just share individual ideas anytime you want—you don't have to have the whole framework. The individual genes are so stupid that they need to have this formal structure in order to not be used in silly ways.

But with intelligence guiding, doing the picking and choosing, I think you won't have sex exactly but you'll have a sharing of ideas. You have a much more free-form exchange when you're talking about intelligence. The thing is, you may still want incentive to do this, so you may build into the internal motivational structure an analogously intense reward for certain kinds of successes.

THE SHRUG OF TURIN

M2: What do you say to *hubris*?

HM: I think that's a concept which says if you put yourself out a little too far, then not only will you probably be punished by having the branch break, but we won't even feel sorry for you—you'll be ostracized from the tribe. So I think it's a parochial concept.

M2: But I'm wondering if the concept of a God might have some sort of biological, evolutionary significance?

HM: You'd want some kind of long-term goal to give you a sense of direction even if you can't figure out right this moment what to do next, so it probably has survival value.

But here's another interesting idea which I'm going to end the book with—an idea that Frank Tipler has been developing out of the more mystical implications of quantum mechanics. It's essentially that the weight function for the universe doesn't describe a particular universe—it describes all possible universes, and only an act of observation clicks into existence a particular one. And the question is: what *is* the act of observation that creates the whole history of the universe?

We are much too puny as observers to do that. We don't see most of the history of the universe. We hardly see anything. So in this story, intelligence grows out from Earth and expands to fill the universe…

M2: Er… how was science fiction important in your development?

HM: Considering these as serious possibilities. Otherwise you tend to think of local possibilities, within society as it exists, rather than thinking of radically different things. It helped to keep getting the mind stretched at an early age. M2

Bait and Switch with Sandy Stone

BY JON LEBKOWSKY, PACO XANDER NATHAN & DAVE DEMARIS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID C. MACKENZIE

The first time I saw Sandy Stone she was being carried aloft on a palanquin by four sturdy dykes. Now here's *a man, thought I, who not only successfully* colonized *the female body... but knows how to exact tribute.*

The tribute matches the legend—and Allucquere Rosanne Stone has worked to create that legend. From recording engineer for Jimi Hendrix to synthesizer development in early Silicon Valley, he fell into computer hacking which lead circuitously to research in sensory physiology and VR.

Her work spans the gamut from communications & media production to cyborg theory, gender, cultural studies, and feminist theory. A prime force behind the International Conferences on Cyberspace, she organized 2CYBERCONF at Santa Cruz in 1991 and recently helped host 3CYBERCONF in Austin. Currently she directs the Interactive Multimedia Laboratory—a.k.a. the ACTlab at U.T. Austin—a burgeoning interdisciplinary center for research into the structure of desire and power in social systems.

Oft sighted with co-conspirator Brenda Laurel, Dr. Stone recently finished a dissertation under the watchful eyes of Donna Haraway. MONDO 2000 *caught up with her between flights to and from Tokyo and Vienna during a brief yet* meaningful *encounter in her hot-tub—an experience of near-total immersion.*

—Mango Malkin

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ALLUCQUERE ROSANNE STONE: Ambiguity and multiplicity are anathema to most people. It's like walking up to somebody and saying "Hey, you're not really a guy, you're just trained to think you're a guy. You actually wander around, you're a boat at anchor in a sea of possibilities, all you have to do is pull up the anchor and you can drift around in this field..." And they don't get it!

JON LEBKOWSKY: When you say "not really a guy," do mean in the sense of just gender? Gender programming?

ARS: Gender programming, yes. I look around the table and I see three guys, and you know—however you see me—and that's all a consensual hallucination that we whip up for each other. But it's not just us—it's a whole structure of power that constrains us to do that.

JL: There's an essential difference there, and we've added layers and layers of bullshit onto that...

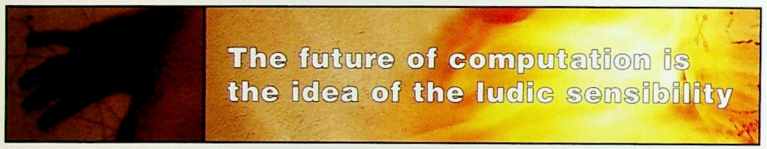
ARS: Culturally...

JL: And what I see now in the gender-bender thing is that people are trying to strip those layers away and see what's really there.

ARS: Uh-huh. And that's really *dangerous*. It's dangerous because, the way power structures work, it really scares people.

PACO XANDER NATHAN: The analogy is with LSD two decades ago.

ARS: Yeah, well acid was much more dangerous, first of all, because it really stripped you down to the bone.



JL: You were hacking perception there.

PXN: Yours or everybody else's?

JL: Well, maybe everybody else's, too. We're all one, and when you start hacking your own reality, you're hacking everybody's reality.

ARS: Tim Leary was onto this very early, and doing it with chemicals was very very dangerous. People are now starting to do minority discourse and queer theory from the same standpoint as what Tim Leary was doing. It's like looking to Marshall McLuhan for the origin of multimedia, and looking to Tim Leary for the origin of minority discourse, a parallel thing. Except I can't imagine Woody Allen pulling Tim Leary out of a line at a movie theatre...

JL: I don't know, I could. To buy a tab of acid from him! [*laughter*]

PXN: People online are talking about multiplicity, and it strikes me that the issue of interface is something we really have to struggle with. Are people looking beyond interface now, and getting into inner experience?

ARS: I think that people are beginning to realize that the definition of interface that we grew up with, like a GUI, is way too narrow to contain what's actually going on. You can look at interface, first of all, as anything across which *agency changes form*, and that's a better way to look at it. Like when your self is actually pouring out through your fingers to somewhere else in the world. And the interface is the thing that mediates between them.

PXN: Or your image when you're dancing with somebody at the Electronic Café.

ARS: Yes. That is exactly the same thing that's going on. So that's a new way of thinking about it.

JL: So where is the interface? In so-called cyberspace?

ARS: "Where is the interface?" is an unanswerable question.

JL: Or "What is the interface?"

ARS: That's an unanswerable question, too. I mean, an interface is a metaphor. We used to think of it as a physical object, a keyboard... but interfaces are metaphors, and they stand in for absent structures, and the absence is the important word here, they're ABSENT structures. They're not where you could see them. It doesn't even mean that they are inside the machine, but they're in an *elsewhere*. And you can call that cyberspace, or you can call it symbolic exchange—there are lots of words that you can use for interfaces. But they work, anyway, they have tremendous power.

PXN: You were talking about play being very essential to what you're accomplishing here at the ACTlab.

ARS: Yeah, there are two ways. The older thing is that... even Vannevar Bush thought about computers as being a kind of a switch... a super switch, but a switch. And even though the early computer people thought of computers as being a kind of prosthesis, they were still thinking out of an earlier paradigm. The transition to the newer paradigm is the one that we're going through now, and it's going to make all the computers we use obsolete very very quickly. Essentially, the new paradigm is computers as an arena for experience—essentially, as Brenda Laurel talks about it, computers as theater. Computers as arenas for experience, and computers for coöperative work. There's a field called "Computer-Supported Coöperative Work," the idea behind which is that what computers really do is to support us in doing work. The other side of that paradigm is "Computer-Supported Coöperative Play." Through play—where there's complex interaction between you and the device—you teach each other really. To have them be used to redefine the physical space between us and the device, how to use metaphors to relate to the device, and what the full purpose of the interaction is. And when you start to play, you can see what happens.

A lot of departments don't let people get online, because it's just fucking around. But this is the future of computation... the future of computation is the idea of the ludic sensibility, the idea of experimentation. Unstructured messing around, and bringing in the sense of fun, and of mystery... all the things that are important to the learning experience which is not a dry, soulless thing. Before we get into schools, it's always a thing that's filled with mystery, and it's filled with danger and humor and chance encounters. And that's what computers are going to be, if we find our way through this morass.

PXN: Something about the MUDs just really bugs the hell out of me, though. I can't quite put my finger on it, but there are so many people that I know that are very comfortable with computers, and express that same feeling

of disturbance. I might invoke The Robot Group as a counter-example, because to be on a MUD, you have to have this *thing*. It's still an object. And even though you can use it to get into this land of play, you still have to basically bow and pray before an object with type on it. But to look at it like the Robot Group... the things they've created are nominally computers, but they don't look like it, and they don't play like it.

ARS: Yeah, but MUDs are not the future of Computer-Supported Coöperative Play. They're a kind of primitive instantiation, a prelude to better things. People in today's MUDs still have one foot in the old paradigm. The new paradigm has to do with things like wearable technology, and ubiquitous technology...

PXN: The triceratop's transition into a small furry mammal.

ARS: Right! The hardware is still there, we still work with this big box. But we're moving toward a period of ubiquitous technology.

PXN: Right, warm-blooded computers! I love it.

ARS: It truly is warm-blooded computers, because the barrier between you and the machine goes away. And it becomes a true prosthetic, which is to say, an invisible, impalpable, unconscious extension where you no longer struggle with the keyboard. It becomes invisible—that's what ubiquity is all about. And it becomes invisible by changing shape, not being a box on the desk, just the way mainframes stopped being these big things. And now we've got the little boxes to contend with, and some people, very fortunately, are getting beyond the box to the hand-held computer, and then beyond the hand-held computer to the wearable computer, and beyond the wearable computer to the ubiquitous computer.

PXN: Is this credible in academia? Is this something that the academic world understands, and pretty much agrees on?

ARS: Well, it depends on whom you're talking to, and what their agendas are. This is something that Media Lab at MIT fooled around with for a very long while. They did good things with it, but they're also oriented in the direction of producing marketable products. Other research nodes are still thinking of high tech interactive multimedia in terms of HyperCard stacks, and this is a real problem. They're thinking of interactive TV in terms of touch-tone, where you get different views of a football game. And this is so sad, because this is what we're going to get for interactive TV. It's not even truly seeking interaction anymore.

PXN: Yeah, in MONDO #9, we're talking about a guy in Philadelphia who gets laptops and makes wearables, and sells them to people out of his garage. If he can do it, certainly Apple can do it.

ARS: Garage *prêt à porter*. Yeah, but I think Apple's gonna do it a few years later in a little bit more sophisticated way.

PXN: It seems like Silicon Valley is running to the beat of this drummer that has trendlike projections coming out of laptops.

ARS: It's not going to come from there. It might come from Sega and it might come from Nintendo.

JL: There's a golden age science fiction story, I can't remember the title, where the protagonist lands on a planet that seems to be totally primitive, there's no sign of technology anywhere. And the bottom line is that the technology is so advanced that it's *invisible*.

DAVE DEMARIS: Stanislaw Lem writes that story over and over again...

PXN: Atlantis and Lemuria, First Foundation and Second Foundation, and that kind of story over and over again. Getting back to mind techniques, I get the sense that you're seeing mind over body...

JL: It wasn't just mind, they did it with machine technologies, but they were just so totally integrated that you couldn't see them anywhere.

ARS: Yeah, like contact lenses. That's the most classic

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example I can think of at the moment. It's a prosthetic that disappears into your body, and then you forget it's there, until, as with any tool, it suddenly becomes visible because it stops working. That's a whole different story. But Silicon Valley is still coming inescapably from the computer paradigm to the laptop paradigm, and with the experience of having been burned to the chops on computer games. So in the meantime, over there in left field, we've got Sega and we've got Nintendo, which are, in their particular way, going to take over the world. They're running away with the market, and they're doing amazing things. We look at them in the lab.

JL: One of the things I see wrong with computer games is exemplified in Castle Wolfenstein [*Apogee Software*].

ARS: Yes, it's been around for a long, long time.

JL: And the thing about it... it's kind of an interesting 3D VR sort of environment, but what the guy does—and this is somewhat controversial—is *shoot* people. He runs through a castle where there's pictures of Hitler and swastikas on the wall, and he shoots people.

PXN: Identifiable icons that will motivate people to violence, right?

ARS: Yeah, these guys are making millions and millions of dollars on essentially making bang-bang shoot-em-up games, but at the same time they are putting in place an incredible technology. These guys are developing the tools for imagination, for play, and for VR and putting those things in place in a way that hasn't yet been used or noticed by the people who are doing educational texts.

JL: Have you read issue #10 of *bOING bOING*? The thing that I wrote about the VR arcade? You have tokens, you're in the arcade, you have a full-body VR suit on, and you're having a series of sexual experiences, and you can push the button like you can in a contemporary arcade. You change the image, and there's a sense of a completely detached sexual experience, jumping from one to another. I was interested in talking about that, and about gender switch, which I was trying to explain to someone from China. It's not easy to explain gender-bender stuff to someone from China.

PXN: One third of the planet.

JL: Yeah, and I think they're pretty rigidly wired, where gender is concerned. I'm not sure she was getting it.

ARS: I'm not sure there's a whole lot you can do about that. Two transsexuals making love is an interesting situation, because nobody is really sure what they are, and there is a continuous sort of shifting of sexuality during the course of it. Sometimes it's homosexual love, and sometimes it's heterosexual love, sometimes it's reverse homosexual love, or reverse heterosexual love, sometimes none of those, and you can't figure out what the hell the categories are, or if there are really supposed to be categories. You just start feeling the sensation.

PXN: That would be perfect for VR.

ARS: Yes, I think that transsexuals invented VR.

JL: We were talking about a man experiencing sex as a woman experiences it, or vice versa, which is something that....

ARS: No! No! You can't! When you say a man experiences sex differently from a woman experiencing sex, people are trained and socialized to experience sex differently, and that means that as a man you can *never* experience sex as a woman, unless you were socialized as a woman.

JL: But this is the whole gender switch thing that they keep talking about doing in VR, about how now you're a man, but you can be a woman...

ARS: It's bullshit! All bullshit, folks!

PXN: Don't you think it's more a matter of social tension... I mean, sex adds tension, rather than sex as a mechanical act?

ARS: If you want sex as a mechanical act, you want to put on a clitoris, then you could get some idea what that was like. But a clitoris is not at all the same sensation as having a penis. So as long as you've got a penis that reacts sexually when you imagine that you have a clitoris, something's wrong. You can't figure out what it's like to have a clitoris unless you can get rid of the penis and have a clitoris, or vice versa. And that's the physical problem... what we're talking about with VR is, you get a woman's body. Well, you don't get a woman's body. Or if you're a woman, you don't get a man's body. You get this simulacrum which replicates certain sensations, and doesn't replicate other sensations.

PXN: Still too damn cold-blooded.

ARS: Yeah. But unless you're willing to take the time to realize how asymmetrical gendering works, how asymmetrical socialization works, you can never understand what it is to be on the other side of that line. Because it's not just two people looking at each other from opposite poles of an experience. It's not equal and opposite, it's unequal and opposite, because in our society men and women don't stand equally.

Gender switch is a wonderful thing to talk about, because it has such interesting potential, but at the same time there's this element of bullshit to it. And it's a real kick for men to cross-dress on the Net as women, because they get a lot of attention. But that doesn't tell them anything about the other side of getting that attention, about being an object of desire, about being a person to whom, to a certain extent, one's real self is opaque, invisible. It isn't even considered in the process of the objectification that turns you into an object of desire and makes it possible for people to swarm around you in that way on the Net.

If you could actually get inside a woman's head and understand what it's like to be a woman, 90% of the time it would not be an erotic thing, because you would understand from the other side about the structures that keep women in place. If you want to be black for a while, that's great. If you seriously want to take on an oppression to find out what it's like to become an exotic Other, great, do it!

PXN: It's like somebody who's marginally famous. They have to deal with the desire of people to talk to them, but that also conflicts with...

ARS: ...their desire to be themselves.

JL: I knew a couple, briefly, who were both at different stages of sex change, both guys who were becoming women, and one was much farther along than the other. There was something that was never quite right, especially the one who was much farther along. She was so much like a woman, yet not a woman, I could sense that.

ARS: There's a whole spectrum within the field of transgender, there are transgender people who feel like cross-dressing is what they want to do, and there are people who like going back and forth across the boundaries. There are people who need surgery because that makes them happy, and there is everything in between.

DD: There are irreversible processes that you can't get across, even if you make those physical changes.

ARS: Yeah, how much oppression can you learn?

PXN: One thing I'd really like to talk about is multiculturalism, which is very fashionable...

ARS: Politically correct.

PXN: Yeah, it 's a good thing that this has come so far, but is multiculturalism a gateway into deeper issues of transgenderism that should be discussed?

ARS: Yes, because multiculturalism is an aspect of multiplicity, and a fragmentation.

PXN: Is that an agenda item, then, for a lot of people? Is that something that's being pushed that standard college freshmen don't see?

ARS: Yeah, it definitely is. And it leads to some interesting problems. Inside the academy, you get people celebrating multiculturalism, and the idea of the wonders of difference and the need to perpetuate cultural enclaves. Then you go out in the world, and instead of finding people arguing over whether they should call themselves latinos or indios, what you find is just a lot of people rushing as fast as they can to be assimilated into mainstream white culture. So who's for multiculturalism? It depends on whom you're talking to. Some people don't want shit to do with multiculturalism. They want to get in there with the oppressor, and just have a good time!

PXN: Let's discuss your works, what you've been publishing.

ARS: There's the crisis of representation in the social sciences. In a funny way I kind of wandered into the social sciences because I came in off the street in the rain into the wrong doorway. And now I'm drifiting away from social sciences, and I'm slipping down the soapy hole of performance art. I think this is the way to go, because it resolves certain problems that I've been having with the question of representation in the social sciences.

PXN: Oh—and what's that?

ARS: Well, the reigning fetish for theory. If you're talking about minority discourse, and you're talking about post-transsexual theory, and you want to do things like queer theory, which is a form of minority discourse, and you want to do some of the more interesting work which is still on the fringes of academia, the traditional way of dealing with the subject of academics is that you do theory.

Theory means that you get up and read papers where you quote other people's work, and then show how your own work fits in with that particular canon, and then you try to push it a little bit beyond that. I find myself drifting away from that, and into performance, where you raise the issues in terms of a question of sensibility and aesthetics, and you get at people from a more emotional level.

Instead of dealing with the technical issues of the way that queer theory works or the way that minority discourse works, in the academy, you do example, you do ostension, you point out that what all the issues of minority discourse and of queer theory and of post-transsexual theory are about is really a kind of performance, and that the theatre for that performance is the body, the conscious THE body or SOME body, but it's THIS body, it's always grounded in THIS body, the place where whatever pain the political apparatus can exert upon you comes down to ground. And multiplicity is one of the strategies for getting around this, but what we're talking about, as much as the wonderful joys of playing with multiplicity, is how you avoid the problem of having the system exert its control on you through the medium of pain. And it's a fuck of a practical problem, and it needs to be addressed in terms of a theater of the body.

PXN: How about being able to pass this body of wisdom etc. on to the next generation—does that work through performance?

ARS: Did Genet pass on a body of wisdom? [*laughter*]

PXN: Yeah, yeah...

ARS: Yeah, I'm inclined to think so. It's a different body of wisdom—it can't be parsed. Academic discourse has exhausted itself. You have to start looking for new ways to encode the culture.

PXN: It sounds like you're re-innoculating the culture with storytelling, and with the great traditions that may have been lost, may have been subdued.

JL: Yeah, how does that work in the academic political context?

ARS: In the academic political context, it's shit, you know... it's anathema, it's *dangerous*. But in some areas, it's not so dangerous. One of the things that I hope to see come out of a center for the arts and technology is the possibility of getting these two frames of reference together in one place, and in one arena, where you can have the arts and technology produce things that are beneficial to both. But technology in the Radio/Television/Film frame also means theory. It means cultural theory, it means cultural criticism, it means minority discourse, it means queer theory, and if we can find some way to get those things together in the field of art, and still have it be academic, then we're taking a jump into a new area where there's real promise.

JL: You're blowing the myth of Two Cultures away.

ARS: Yeah... seriously!

PXN: On the other side of it, people like Stelarc seem already to have jumped some boundaries. People doing that kind of performance art, but very high tech, seem very sexy to the people who are also high tech, but ensconced in theory.

ARS: Yes.

PXN: Yet you're coming from the other side... can you leapfrog off them?

ARS: I think you can. As a matter of fact, I talk about Stelarc in some of my courses for precisely that reason, and for

better or worse I talk about the Fakir [*Mustafar*], because he's also useful in a lot of ways. The Fakir is a real interruption, if you use certain pictures of him. I like to put up a picture of the Fakir hanging by hooks through his pecs, blowing on his bong whistle. The last time I did this I had about 400 undergraduates, and I said "I'm going to show you a slide now, and I want you to pay attention to what happens when I show this to you. First of all, I'm going to tell you intellectually what's going to happen. You're going to go 'Holy Shit!' and for just an instant there, something very peculiar is going to happen inside you, and then we're going to go back and pursue what that was that happened," and then I put the Fakir slide up, and the audience goes [*shrieking gasp*]... they invariably do—it's so gratifying—they just come apart for an instant there. And then I say, "All right, what just happened?"

This image is really disruptive. You can't just go on from one minute to the next, because this guy makes you want to throw up for just that second. It's REALLY STRANGE. And in that instant, the nuts and bolts that make up the way reality works become visible, and if you can grab hold in that instant, and just tear it apart, then you have some idea about... not only how to change your perception, but also something about how your social structure works. And you have to learn to develop that moment, the moment of rupture, and use if for yourself, and use it as a tool to be able to take apart the sutures of reality.

PXN: I was thinking of *The Crying Game*—that really fucked with people's preconceptions.

ARS: I was very pleased that it did what it did. I run into a lot of people who say, "Oh, I knew it from the beginning." [*laughter*] So what? It still fucks with your head in so many different ways—with identity and with the issues of "passing"—passing politically, passing as an individual, passing for subjectivity, passing for gender, and they all keep coming up and getting twisted and confused. Stelarc and the Fakir and the people who do that kind of work are all remapping the surface of the body, remapping the way sensation works with regard to the body, in a way that sensation itself becomes very plastic.

When you start doing that kind of thing, you've got to be careful that you don't neglect the idea of torture, where pain is a political tool. And when people start to use pain in performance as a way of remapping the body's sensorium, you've gotta be careful to remember that while you're doing that very ludic, very important work, there are ways in which pain is also used that are *not* fun, in which it's used as an aspect of control. When you're doing a scene, and you're hurting somebody, and they haven't said their safe word yet, that's an entirely different thing from having somebody on the table and very slowly turning up the electric voltage 'cause you're trying to get something out of them. And we have to figure out how to deal with both. We have to find a workable political framework that deals with both, that acknowledges the reality of torture and gets rid of it, while at the same time preserving the validity of play in a sado-masochistic framework. That's a fuck of a problem.

PXN: I'm not coming off the angle of torture as much as the angle of terror. I think that we have to learn to validate terror a lot more.

JL: That's just another kind of pain—psychological pain.

PXN: We've had our first terrorist bombing in the U.S. We have to come to grips with terror. It keeps us in check-and-balance, but we've been denying it for a couple of hundred years here.

ARS: Oh, boy, is the Net alive with that argument right now, have you been following any of this? There's a tremendous amount of discussion of terror right now, and some of the people who live in countries where terror is the order of the day are saying "It's about time you guys got on the program!" [*laughter*]

JL: I was thinking about those millennialists in Waco, too...

PXN: I was hanging out with the PLO in the early 80's, and I guess a lot of my mindset comes out of the fact that I personally validate terror in that sense, intellectually, not in terms of going out and doing random car bombings, but I recognize it as a means of political action.

JL: Poetic terrorism.

PXN: Yeah...

ARS: That's the Hakim Bey approach to terrorism. There's a real problem with the word. People are being very careful about talking about poetic terrorism and real terrorism.

JL: What Hakim Bey's talking about is subversion rather than real terrorism.

PXN: So how can a kid prepare himself to be a cognitive dissident? Say he asks "I wanna major in cyberspace in college, what should I read now?" Just telling someone to go program in C is not enough... they ought to be developing a different conceptual framework. Where can a person go?

ARS: Study improv. Read Marshall McLuhan.

PXN: Really?

ARS: Yeah, that's the first two things that come to my mind. And then read certain selected articles, which is going to sound awfully egocentric...

PXN: Go for it...

ARS: One of them is Stone, in *Incorporations*, which is called "Virtual Systems." The other is Stone, in *Cyberspace, First Steps*, which is called "Will the Real Body Please Stand Up?" And then there are several forthcoming things which are not out yet. One of them is called "Split Subjects, not Atoms, or How I Learned to Love My Prosthesis," which will be out very shortly. Then there's a piece coming out in a book called *Lost Boundaries: The History of Media-Induced Experience*. My other books in progress are *Presence: The war of desire and technology at the close the mechanical age*, and *Transgression: Adventures at the edges of identity*. And if you're *really* a glutton for punishment...

PXN: Oh, I am! I am!

ARS: Well, *Ktahmet*, my first science fiction novel (circa 1967)—which circulated through the underground for twenty years—is being resurrected by DAW and will be published soon. It's a hypertextual recursive tell-all *Bildungsroman* in which I essentially pitched all my friends and shuffled my diary entries. It's about memory and identity, written from the perspective of a cyberspace-surfing transgendered polysexual Jewish Neopagan hacker.

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ARTHUR KROKER

INTERVIEWED BY SHARON GRACE

PAINTINGS BY ATTILA RICHARD LUKACS

Arthur Kroker luxuriates in the Awful Truth about our culture. He savors the wormwood, swills it around in his mouth, and—like the exorcist he is—spits it out at his audience. Anyone who has caught his act—either from the podium at Concordia U, or his touring road show with Spasm*—will concur: this is no ordinary pedagogue.*

A defrocked Jesuit, he authored The Possessed Individual, Body Invaders: Panic Sex in America, *and* The Hysterical Male. *Kroker's jaundiced view of cultural politics is both hypermodern and oddly old-fashioned. Mixing wit, bombast, and his own parody of Nanterre critical vocabulary, his work stands alone. Coruscating, maddening, unique. As Bruce Sterling said:*

"You kinda have to see Arthur do his thing in public to realize the true depth of his life-giving effervescence. He says these dreadful, utterly maddening things in that dry, scalpel-sharp tone of his, and people absolutely laugh their asses off. They laugh until they get a kind of terrible nebulous pain behind the floating rib, and when it's all over, they feel as if they've had Filipino surgery. They feel as if some kind of terrible malodorous thing has been miraculously identified, grubbed out, removed from within them, and displayed in a formalin jar. And they go out blessed by the double-sign of Overloading and Excess."

"Call Michael" by Attila Richard Lukacs 1987. Diane Farris Gallery, Vancouver, B.C.

QUIS
ARL87

MONDO 2000: You call our era the "Great Recline of Western Civilization," and virtual reality "the dream of liberal fascism." Who's in control here?

ARTHUR KROKER: In an age of what I call liberal fascism there are two key command groups. There are the owners—the kind of "creative" owners of the main conglomerates—and what motivates them is not merely the accumulation of profits or even power, but something much broader, and that's *the ability to infuse the cultural landscape with their sense of historical destiny.* They view themselves as having a historical mission and they work to imprint their vision of the "good" human experience on everyone else. And they are *everywhere*. I think of John Sculley, who views himself as a Homer of digital reality, and when he moved from Pepsi to Apple, wrote himself as sort of the Caesar of the wilderness. He wrote the Odyssey—you know—*An American Odyssey.*

And Bill Gates, of course—all these arbiters of culture. The owners of the computer corporations are all glamour junkies—they're all missionaries for a new historical destiny.

M2: And so what constitutes Real Privilege within the simulacra—within these kinds of technoforms of the recombinant body of the recombinant mind?

AK: [*Unfazed*] There are two distinct forms of privilege. For myself, the age in which we live—what I call "the Age under the Sign of the Will to Virtuality"—that's what VR is all about. It's about closing down the world in subordination to technical willing.

The most privileged in American society would be the technocratic specialists who do the day-to-day work, the real theorization, the real invention of digital reality. Their reward comes in terms of expanded choice within the social structures of the mediascape itself. They have expanded freedoms. These are kind of curious expanded freedoms because they're expanded *technological* freedoms and they view their freedom...

M2: When you say "They"???

AK: Well the "they" breaks down pretty fast. There are four main classes in society. There's the dispossessed, like the homeless people on the streets of S.F., who from the point of view of the system today, are absolute remainders, are human refuse. You just know that they're real sacrificial victims, right in front of you. Now that's the class outside of the system. Then there's the traditional working class, which is the physically majoritarian class. It's certainly not close to the levers of power. And this class is victimized as well. It's found in obsolescent industries and it's forced to go through these purges of reconsolidation and retraining. No one takes care of its interests in terms of the technocratic renewal of America. Their main value is "belongingness." Every advertiser knows that—beer commercials like "Here's George and the boys drinking beer together"—buddies, you know?

But the real power and privilege resides in two other classes. A class of specialists, technical specialists, who are the theorists of digital reality. There's no place where they congeal with greater ferocity and density than in a city like S.F., or in Silicon Valley, or Chiba City outside Tokyo, or around Toronto, or MIT. They are territorial, and they're into virtuoso display. But their main impetus is expansion of their sphere of freedom—*technological* freedom. They very happily view themselves as servomechanisms of digital reality. If you talk to these missionaries in their research labs, they'll say to your face "This new kind of monitoring device"—in, like, the new office of the future—"will make possible godlike surveillance techniques and will make it possible to get rid of ourselves, and who needs a self anyway, and who needs a body anyway, because your body will ultimately betray you and die. Furthermore, this technology can give you not just one self, or not just one body, it can give you a *multiplicity* of imaged selves. And if you're sitting in your office, you don't need office mates—you look on your TV screen and you can get *perfect* fractal flittering images of office mates in different offices, not just across the hallway or in the same office building, but [*inflecting his voice*] why not from other countries as well where the corporation will have other headquarters (cuz after all it's the happy corporate family)?!?"

To visit these labs is a *singularly depressing* experience. Singularly astonishing to realize how sophisticated the development of demonic power in the hands of the technocrats has become; and singularly depressing to realize that the technocrats are immensely *pleased* to abandon their selves, abandon their bodies, abandon any kind of individuation of emotion as quickly as possible. *These are really Dead Souls.* But at the same time they are dead souls with real missionary zeal—because they equate technology with religion and they call it freedom. They're in the vanguard but they're not really in command. They're the technocrats doing the basic theoretical and experimental work.

The Commanders are in fact the presidents of the corporations, the legions of CEOs—you know, all the "creative leadership" of digital reality. They're beyond money, power, and social interest. These are people whose one interest lies in the possibility of *fusing* their individual identity with the

historical spirit of the times. So when they think of digital reality or virtual reality, they think of their own kind of internal private affect, or internal dreams about technology, about the possibility of publicizing those dreams and in fact making those dreams the collective consciousness of the population as a whole. They view themselves as the Caesars of the digital wilderness.

Now the only two problems with this are just what Nietzsche said long ago—the spirit of the times is that of two forms of nihilism. The technocrats are passive nihilists with one outstanding characteristic—they have never learned to think deeply about themselves. They just look at their TV sets, or they look at their computer screens, and they *burp*. They just want entertainment for the day, energized by periodic bursts of missionary zeal on behalf of continuously ever-expanding digital consciousness. They become technological fetishists addicted to technological euphoria. They cannot think outside the limits of their own consciousness. And they are the growing majority of American today. Particularly under Clinton who went to Silicon Graphics and said "This is an expressive nation, this is the nation that created CNN and MTV, this is a jazzy nation—thank goodness for my sake—this is an information age and we're all going to be hardwired for realtime." Which is, of course, Marvin Minsky's version of America, which is that the perfect body will have the soft matter of its skull scooped out and you'll be hardwired into digital reality itself. These are the passive nihilists.

The elite who occupy the commanding heights of digital reality are *suicidal* nihilists. Suicidal nihilists know that there is no longer any substantive purpose to their willing. But they would always prefer to go on willing than not to act at all. They can very happily ally themselves with a notion of nuclear holocaust or perfect exterminism. There's a suffocating smugness and a kind of self-certainty about this class of technocrats that is quite astonishing. And I think that those occupying the heights of digital reality have precisely this mentality. They're creating again and again the exterminism of human memory, the exterminism of human sensibility, the exterminism of individuated human intelligence, the exterminism of human morality itself.

M2: What about the world banking community—the financiers above the rank of CEO pulling the strings?

AK: Yeah, well all those I would put in the same camp. You could speak of a financial elite, a political elite, a digital elite, a media elite, but I think their common vocation is the creation of historical destinies. They are truly the cycloids of our culture. They're the dark occult priests of the real operations of power in American society. The more you go into conspiracy theory, the more you realize that in some ways all conspiracy theories are true. That in fact the projection of private consciousness onto the mass consciousness as the historical dream for the age, releases monsters. It's what Blake said long ago—the sleep of reason begets monsters. Nietzsche added to that—he said watch out for the day when the feelings of pity, nausea, and self-loathing mix together—*you'll have true monstrous consciousness.*

Morally, the elite are really profoundly perverse. They are like what Baudrillard says: the great priests and the cardinals and the monks of the age who have realized that power is cynical, that technology is cynical, and are prepared to operate on that basis of *perfect cynicism.* And it's people like this who allow the mediations to happen, but the price to be paid for it is that our culture becomes a culture of exterminism. When Paul Virilio talks about the War Machine, he says the War Machine is never about making war against an external enemy. The War Machine is really about using an external enemy as a sacrificial kind of scapegoat for the endocolonization of your own population, for the creation of a domestic bestiary. So the logic then—the threefold war logic of tactics, strategy, and logistics—is to invade against your own domestic population.

The only basis for doing any critical politics today is to understand the dicey situation we live in; to have some glimmering of the cruelty of despotic powers that operate

today. Powers that operate not through the language of coercion but through the language of *seduction.*

M2: So what's your strategy for treading that fine line?

AK: I have a very clear strategy which I call "crash aesthetics." Crash aesthetics operates on a kind of doubling principle. It's partly *ironic immersion*—full ironic immersion in a medium of communication, in the very fonts of culture. I write about excremental culture—Excremental TV, TV as image effluence. And I can talk about it pretty vividly. I do a lot of writing on television. I do a lot of writing on camcorders. I do a lot of investigations of Silicon Valley research labs. I do most of my writing at McDonald's. I run through a whole gamut of experience. I don't write about anything I haven't already experienced.

At the same time, the double strategy is that I practice *critical distancing* from this because, rather than assent meekly to the notion of technological freedom, I also hold that technology not only contains possibilities of freedom but...

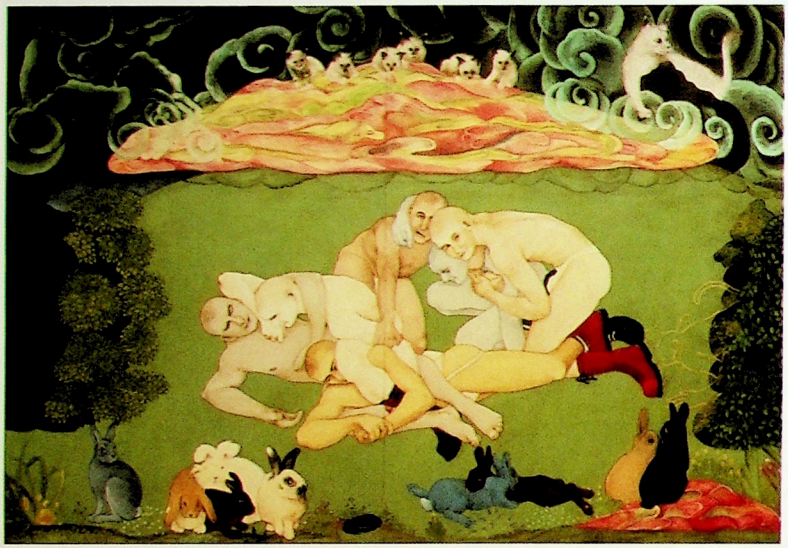
"Sheltering Himself From the Storm" by Attila Richard Lukacs 1992. Diane Farris Gallery.

M2: Aren't we veering toward dangerous shoals here? I mean, can anyone watch television and remain a truly sentient being?

AK: But the dominant form of consciousness in the world today is television.

M2: Yes... but I wonder if we aren't becoming kind of theorofascist?

AK: As Les Brown says, criticizing television is second only in popularity to watching it. But there *is* no one in technological culture who's a truly sentient human being. Everyone's become in some way like a recombinant being. This technology is not something that we hold outside ourselves. It's, in fact, the animating spirit of our bodies. Television creates technologies of subjectivity. It creates real televisual citizens. I mean, I'm really serious when I say that we've undergone a big evolutionary shift. I think that technology has genuinely come alive as a living species



"Stretching the Body" by Attila Richard Lukacs 1992. Diane Farris Gallery.

existence. It's acquired organicity which is recombinant in character. It has its own forms of intelligence, its own forms of feelings, its own principles of dynamic growth, which are as closely described as those of recombinant genetics. So, in that culture then, those old "sentient human beings" that you want to talk about, are at least two things. They are simultaneously televisual—they've been incorporated into the technology and imprinted by the technologies as televisual subjects, or as digitized subjects. At the same time, when you're thrown outside the technosystem, your body is remaindered. Everyone lives schizophrenically today. We're all human beings on our way to death, oscillating between our bodies being a pleasure chamber or a torture chamber. You know, we're all sort of like zooming down the highway on the way to intensive care.

We're living a technological reality that has really come alive with a kind of glittering seduction. So, to talk about TV today is to talk about Excremental TV. And Excremental TV means that television functions today exactly like an image effluent system, for processing a society that is no longer about accumulation and coherency, but operates according to the opposite principle—which we put a premium on today—which is about self-cancellation and self-exterminism. Technology's great appeal is, in fact, that it allows you to get *rid* of your memories, to get *rid* of your minds. And in exchange it gives you in fact many other memories, and many other minds and many other selves—you know, our televisual selves.

TV is about resequencing the human cultural code. In recombinant genetics, the gene operates according to threefold logic of cloning, transcription, and resequencing. TV uses an analogous language. TV is also about preparing televisual subjects for living in a culture where everyone's happy to get rid of their memories. Ready to get rid of their bodies; happy and seduced by getting rid of their bodies. I view television now as almost a preliminary phase in preparing the masses of humanity for virtual reality.

And that's just the beginning of critical thinking about television, just the beginning of an understanding of what it means to be a sentient human being living at the end of the twentieth century. To really understand it we have to talk about things like disciplinary television, surveillance television—you know, the camcorder—sacrificial television, and "crash" television.

M2: You went to that conference in Holland—"The Next Five Minutes." How was it?

AK: It was fabulous. It brought together media practitioners and people politically involved in the medium, both in production and distribution, from all over the world. They consider themselves "tactical practitioners." In fact, the basic theme of the conference was the opposition between strategic TV—corporatively owned TV—and tactical TV. People talked about the notion of using the medium for really liberatory political objectives. So you had African American media groups, Romanian liberation media practitioners, and the whole spectrum of Central and Eastern Europe, including Siberians with their own independent TV studios. And Americans, Canadians, and Latin Americans. It was pretty phenomenal. There were practical hands-on demonstrations and intensely deep theoretical political discussions—discussions on technical innovations, the use of cabling systems, satellite TV (like the Buffalo Witness Program), etc.

Marilouise and I took apart strategic TV into its four dimensions of sacrificial TV, crash TV, disciplinary TV and surveillance TV, and critiqued them from the perspectives of different cultures. In Japan you have a sophisticated corporate perspective on digital reality, and at the same time there are a lot of thinkers who are marginal to the culture, but who *think*. They're typically workers, poets, and philosophers. We recently published an issue of *CTHEORY* on Japanese critiques of technology. These perspectives are not allowed to be published in Japan, and we have a lot of Japanese students coming to us to read this stuff. In Europe

the form of critique varies pretty radically from country to country. One of the most creative places in Europe is Amsterdam. And the various research groups like *V2*, *Nox*, *Andere Sinema*, and the brilliant magazine, *MediaMatic*, are rethinking technology. They've got a highly nuanced explanation of the ways in which tech enters and exits the body—quite an original contribution to technoculture. That's why Geert Lovink, a Dutch theorist, says the European con-tribution to global technoculture is that of wetware. America is software, and Japan is hardware. Europe is aestheticizing the technostructure by scouring the universal media archive of European culture for ways in which it can be reappropriated. Technology is the global aesthetic and the global aesthetic consists of this kind of triangulation—Japanese hardware, North American software, and European wetware. In Europe, I found a much greater welcome for people thinking critically about technology, from the creative research labs like *V2* in Holland and *IKON TV* and pirate *Radio Pattapoe* in Amsterdam to the new art and technology centers at Karlsruhe in Germany. These are really important centers of thought.

M2: One of the major catastrophic techno-events of this century was fought in the European theater...

AK: Yes, Europe is where the project of the Enlightenment came to its end in the Holocaust, in genuine forms of fascism. The one great unifying theme among European thinkers is a kind of disdain for America. Either they completely misread America, or they are technological fetishists of America. They themselves buy the vision of technology as the American dream—a kind of Disneyworld.

This is the perfectly seductive quality of America to the world. That it's the world's first purely postmodern, which is to say, the world's first purely *cynical* culture. It entertains opposite impulses simultaneously. It's got the crusading spirit for the technical apocalypse. At the same time, it revels in a kind of violent primitivism. It's all about reënergization through violence. At the same time, it's about a city on the hill bringing a new light to the world—like a new animating vision of democracy and justice and equality. America's not conservative or liberal. It's not perfectly primitive or hypermodern. It's perfectly schizophrenic.

M2: What's the most radical action or behavior a citizen can manifest in late technoculture?

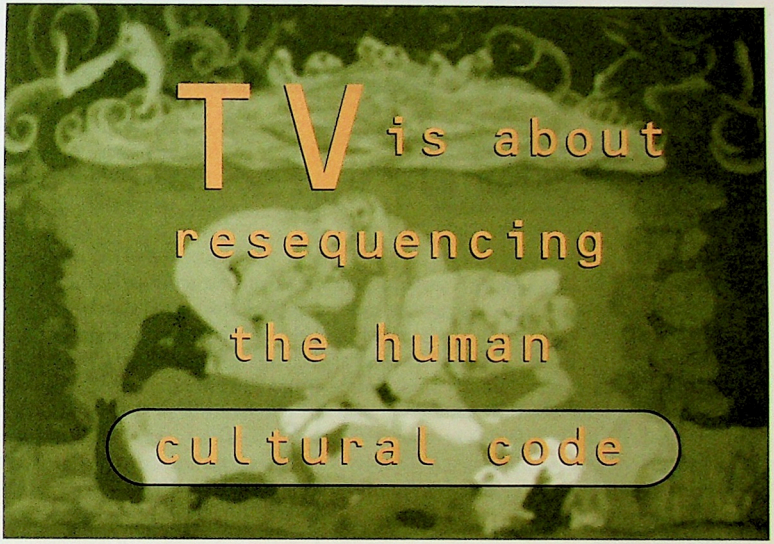
AK: The philosopher Karl Jaspers once said that the limits of technological domination are reached when a human being says "No" ethically to the notion of technology as freedom. So I would say the most radical action is saying "No" while saying "Yes" to technology—or in critically distancing yourself while drowning your body in high tech. Cruising the electronic frontier at hyper-speed with a copy of Nietzsche's *Will to Power* in your virtual hands.

M2: What is the perfect body for the age of ultra technology, for the 1990's?

AK: The perfect body for the 90's is what the scientists gathered in Paris said—a body fit for exiting gravitational pull, a kind of floating body without legs that becomes a purely expanding and contracting memorex mind. And it needs a lot of ports so that you can be accessed by data via the Net—that's the body that's fit for the 1990's. That's not cynical—it's hyperrealistic.

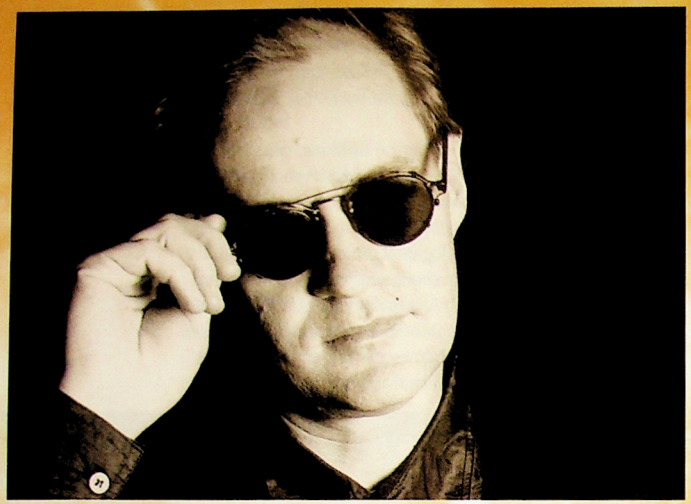
M2: There is a lot of eschatological thinking going on right now. Technoculture embraces catastrophe the way it embraces VR. Isn't this coöption of millenarian consciousness a way of avoiding responsibility?

AK: One of the symptomologies of our age is panic, and panic millenarianism is not about catastrophe but a kind of *desirable* historical destiny. And the unfolding has a kind of enchantment principle about it. So a lot of millenarianism today operates under the sign of seduction and it has about it a kind of escape theme. Then there's panic finance—with



the techno-elite in banking—another symptomology of the times. Panic finance is when, in the financial exchange markets, they move from blue to red shift bandwidths—they move with a kind of hypervelocity and they seek to escape the materiality of money. They move into credit and then they move into electronic bytes. We live in a genuinely post-capitalistic age in which the image of capitalism is sort of kept alive and has life breathed into it by a technostructure that has in fact *eaten* capitalism. So to talk about anonymous banking is to talk about the complete technification of the economy and the liquidation of capitalism. Like the language of common genetics, it's a language of sequencing and transcription and cloning. It's profoundly enlightening to transcribe how human genetic code is indexed and reindexed into an analysis of contemporary culture.

Heidegger's old notion that technology is about the dynamic will, about the ever expanding momentum of technological society is just completely incorrect. The will to technology now flips into its opposite form, the will to virtuality. It's about a great slowing down and a great recline



Kroker Watch

EVENTS

Bruce Sterling and Arthur Kroker will participate in a *Spasm* conference on The WELL in the Fall. They'll be online to discuss *Spasm* and cyberpunk. [*WELL voice line: (415) 332-4335*] Also, in Canada, CBC's *Newsworld* is organizing a televised conversation between William Gibson and Arthur Kroker in which *Spasm* and Gibson's new book *Virtual Light* will be discussed. In Montreal, Kroker's rock band, Sex Without Secretions, will head up a book/CD launch at Gallerie Stormaway. Finally, in Fall 1993 and Spring 1994, there will be a CultureTexts road show—the Sex Without Secretions World Tour—in which multimedia *Spasm* events will crash different event-scenes in the U.S., Canada, and Europe, from Death Valley, Berkeley, and L.A., to Berlin and Bucharest, Romania.

BOOKS

Kroker's latest books in the CultureTexts series are *Spasm: Virtual Reality, Android Music and Electric Flesh* (with a 50 minute CD by digital composer Steve Gibson), and *The Last Sex: Feminism and Outlaw Bodies* (edited and introduced by Arthur and Marilouise Kroker). Both are published by St. Martin's Press in the U.S. and New World Perspectives in Canada.

ELECTRONIC JOURNAL

Arthur and Marilouise Kroker edit *CTHEORY*, an electronic journal on technology and culture. *CTHEORY*'s Editorial Board includes such luminaries as Kathy Acker, Jean Baudrillard, Bruce Sterling, and Andrew Ross. *CTHEORY* contains electronic book reviews of key books in contemporary theory, posted monthly; event-scenes in politics, culture, and the mediascape; short abstracts of articles in the disk version of the *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*; and an electronic (virtual reality) theory salon, which is interactive and unmoderated.

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and a great easing of things. And that's the age we have entered very deeply. It's the *re*cline of Western Civilization—not even the decline. It means that every thing you think of as dynamic and active really means its opposite. The growth of fantastic transportation systems with enormous vectors of speed have about them a great form of inertia. Cities with the creation of traffic grids and the immobility of the population itself. The gridlocking of communications technologies. The great inertial drag on what we usually mean by mobility itself or the notion of speed in contemporary culture. You may get great algorithmic speed but you get a shutting down and a recline of other forms—a great atrophication of important traditional sensibilities. Like the ability to link an aesthetic sense with political judgment. Or the ability for memory to have some relationship to human history.

M2: So it's kind of like amputations that occur with the embrace of each new technology?

AK: That's exactly true—and simultaneously the retrieval of other sensibilities. So it's never really static. That's an old McLuhan idea. McLuhan for me is really an important thinker. His notion of the Tetrad is really pretty crucial and it's basically under-utilized as a way of analyzing contemporary culture. Most people read McLuhan and see in him a kind of technological fetishist who thinks about the medium as the culture-processed world. It has never been the way I've read McLuhan. If you go back to McLuhan's earliest writings when he was a Catholic writer in Teachers College, he had an insistent ethical question which for him meant that technology promises possible epiphanies of experience, but usually delivers a fantastic kind of exterminism of human potentialities. The McLuhan I read is kind of double-edged. So I see myself as a Canadian successor to McLuhan in many ways, but as a McLuhan for the 1990's.

M2: I think McLuhan influenced Virilio...

AK: And Baudrillard's notion of the simulacrum is really McLuhan's notion of electronic culture.

M2: And McLuhan's "vanishing point" is Virilio's disappearance of the human into the machine.

AK: Well, the whole French pomo critical establishment has had a field day with American culture. America is like the culmination of the Enlightenment Project. They track us with endless fascination.

Baudrillard writes about the simulacrum. Barthes writes about rhetoric coming alive, like living rhetoric machines by which one can analyze *Barthes*. Foucault talks about technology as having a life force and coming

Photo by Linda Dawn Hammond

alive—which strikes me as an early anticipation of the notion of technology acquiring organicity and operating under the sign of seduction and not under the sign of coercion. And Virilio writes brilliantly on the aesthetics of disappearance—the sight machine—and he's talking about the language of the movement of war beyond strategy, tactics, and logistics into logistical control, or the policing of the logistics of perception. All of those French thinkers I wrote about in *The Possessed Individual* are really providing a theoretical vocabulary for understanding technoculture. If you haven't armed yourself with that vocabulary, it's very hard to be master of your situation. But, as McLuhan says, what are you to say to people when they put their heads in the teeth of technology's buzzsaw and call it freedom?

M2: You say we're in danger of becoming *servomechanisms* of virtual reality. That's provocative. Is VR the 90's definition of "getting a life"?

AK: Getting a life is really about choosing your memory—you know, is it memory or Memorex? We live in a really recombinant culture in which the principles of recombinant genetics are lived out on a daily basis in everyone's lives. If you live in the mediascape—and who does not?—it's got ways to clone, splice, retranscribe and resequence memory itself. So in that sense, the notion of getting a life is: getting another kind of corporative way of moving through media itself. And you can't have *one* life, you in fact have a variety of *styles*. That's the basis of the notion—"Are we having fun yet?"

M2: What is subjectivity in technoculture?

AK: Subjectivity is always schizophrenic in technoculture. Speaking subjectively of subjectivity, of course! It's always lived in a double sense. On the one hand your body is a processed world, processed as in sampler music—the language of aliasing, of condensation, of syncopation, of displacement, of speed-up and slow-down, all pretty much digitally recorded. That's the normal language by which we live in TV culture, in consumer culture, in our jobs and our music. Subjectivity now is fully ironic, fully ambivalent, fully paradoxical and contradictory. The technocratic specialist practices mechanical forgetfulness. That is, they manage to so engross themselves in data work that they lose sight of the ability to think deeply about what it means to be a human being and to engage in social relationships outside the imperatives of the technostructure. That's pure mechanical forgetfulness. Or the corporative elite engage in suicidal nihilism which is to say that they make of their bodies what Nietzsche called a site of conscious experimentation, and they make of their minds a site of experimental cruelty, creating ribald games of mindfucking cruelty. As a teacher I have found that many of my students lack those options and in fact refuse those options and they're caught in these cruel situations. Some commit suicide, and others become slackers. The mood was caught very accurately in the film *Slacker*. They live in this kind of interzone. The "Vague Generation" is what the Montreal writer Michael Boyce calls them. They live ambivalently with a kind of passionate commitment to politics—yet in many ways, with a kind of indifference. They view themselves as powerless, but also try to create interesting forms of art, at the same time dealing with the inner reality of having their options close down.

M2: Better Vague than Vogue.

AK: Vaguers really combine ambivalence, indifference, paradox and ironic immersion as a life ethic. They're bored but fascinated; anxious, but pretty well at peace with themselves. Montreal, where I come from, has the highest suicide rate in the Western world. A lot of students throw themselves onto train tracks. There is a suicide a week on the Montreal subways. Typically, it's young people that commit suicide and that bespeaks a sense of phenomenal depression—a sense of bleakness and closed-downness of experience. It's almost unimaginable. And there is no one helping because the technostructure just moves ahead. The powers that be just turn with complete indifference to this. Montreal is ahead of Germany. Germany used to be ahead.

M2: Ahead in the race to suicide?

AK: Ahead in the race to Virtuality. M2

Sharon Grace has straddled the art and electronic media worlds for two decades. She teaches at San Francisco Art Institute where her turf is the power of the Gaze, high-tech military imaging systems, and the reading of cyphers as a source of transcendence.

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Miranda: Wool crepe jacket with stars and long flat tail skirt by Thierry Mugler Rock; earrings by Kenneth Jay Lane; platform shoes by Sam & Libby.
Guitar: Bottlage jacket by Jean Paul Gaultier; Pattern sling back by Wet Seal Stars/Thigh

Lysistrata 2000
FASHION PHOTOGRAPHY BY TOM PITTS
Mandy™ Manifarfa dress by
Thierry Mugler; Shoes by
Michelle Perry/22 Steps

Cinvet Medici Black Velveteen with silk chiffon underskirt by Alfreza; Shoes by Robert Clergerie/ 22 Steps
Mandys Chianti velveteen gown with draped bodice by Alfreza; Shoes by Robert Clergerie & Rock earrings by Kazuko/22 Steps
Mandys Botticelli shirt velvet top with silk chiffon skirt by Alfreza; Shoes by Robert Clergerie; Earrings by Kazuko /22 Steps

Tom & Sean:
Chain Mail
shorts and
harness
by Michael
Schmidt

Mandy: Ivory cable knit dress by Thierry Mugler; Wooden sole 3/4 ankle strap shoes by Sam & Libby / 22 Steps
Sean and Tom: Chain Mail'le by Michael Schmidt
Miranda: Nylon/Lamé suit by Stock; Platform shoes by Sam & Libby

Mandy: Green mesh dress by Michael Schmidt
Miranda: Stretch vinyl corset dress by SUCK
Platform shoes by Sam & Libby / 22 Steps

Behold Cintra Wilson. Aka Winter Steele. She's the words and voice behind the tough biker chick and tragic romantic who only has eyes for Crow on Liquid Television.

But before she hit MTV, she was known in the Bay Area as a playwright, actress, and director. Her most popular theater piece was the recent XXX, a play about the Mitchell Brothers Theater. It's based on a True Life local drama involving a Cain and Abel brothers scenario, strippers, and pornography. Wilson came under fire when comments made to Michael Snyder were interpreted as putting down our local sex workers. And as anybody who's been around bohemian San Francisco knows, our local sex workers are like... way hip.

Look for Ms. Wilson's new piece, Las Apassionadas *on next season's Liquid Television.*

—R. U. Sirius

BY R. U. SIRIUS

Cintra Wilson

CINTRA WILSON: *Winter Steele* is like my only legitimate claim to fame anywhere but San Francisco. It's also like the dumbest, quickest thing I've ever done.

R. U. SIRIUS: Surely not! ...Have you had a lot of response to that? Have you heard from fans?

CW: Not much, but in sweet little cultish ways. I heard that Winter was on the cover of some lesbian college newsletter back East. That's the kind of stuff you really want to hear.

Of course, MTV are a bunch of gutless, heartless, money-grubbing asshole fluff boys from Viacom so... *did I say that?* They are really hard to work for. They're really mean and censorious and kind of rude. They're the janitors of television. They put horrible impositions on everybody and they never pay anybody. They're just *nasty*. They consider me unrelated to *Winter Steele* now that I've signed the contract.

RUS: So do you have experience with that kind of romantic loser/biker sort of thing?

CW: [*A little taken aback*] Sheesh... I was never really a biker but I was definitely like a totally suffering romantic retard.

RUS: [*Laughs*] Are you still?

CW: Yes... yeah.

RUS: Tell us about your new theater piece.

CW: I can't talk about it yet. I've gotta be careful now because I started talking too soon with XXX and got in trouble with strippers. They picketed my opening night! They based their objections on an article in the (*S.F. Sunday Chronicle*) Pink Section that was largely paraphrased.

RUS: It's weird to have strippers picketing a performance, because usually it's people who are really self-righteous and puritanical who go out and picket movies and performances.

CW: It's funny, isn't it? They picketed me because they thought I was *too* puritanical... MONDO isn't gonna print the picture with my tits hanging out on the cover, are they? I think it would be too racy if they did that.

RUS: I don't actually know, but I don't think MONDO would do bare tits on the cover.

CW: I'm basically covered with tape.

RUS: Oh, that may be the cover shot now that I think about it.

CW: Oh really?

RUS: Yeah.

CW: Oh my God... I'm not sure if I wanna be on the cover of MONDO with just like tape on my nipples. [*pleadingly*] Don't print that...

RUS: Oh that's a pull quote!

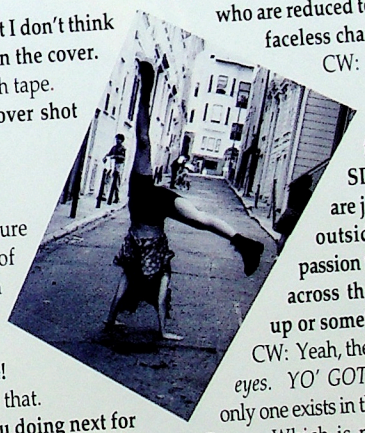
CW: Please don't pull quote that.

RUS: Sooooo... what are you doing next for Liquid Television?

CW: It's a live action show called *Las Apassionadas* and it's about these art terrorist girls in this fictional land called Afro-Italy, like taking Morocco and putting it in Rome. We blow up the Statue of David for good reasons. It should be cool. *They* wouldn't have me on the cover with nothing but tape. It would be too pornographic. It would be too racy.

RUS: Mmm, uhhh... I don't know. I can't speak for the design team.

CW: [*Playfully*] I'm a little nervous. I'm a little nervous. I'm telling ya right now.



Photos by Stephanie Rausser

SCRAPPI DÜCHAMP: [*Rapid change of subject*] A striking aspect to *Winter Steele* is the contrast between the main characters and the extras, who are reduced to these sock puppets... faceless characters.

CW: We sort of had the Nietzschean Übermensch kind of thing in mind for Winter and Crow.

SD: Yeah! These others are just needless. Characters outside of the one you have passion for are just to be whacked across the river or blown up or something...

CW: Yeah, they're just *socks with eyes*. *YO' GOT IT!* For Winter, only one exists in the world and that's Crow. Which is pretty much how tragic love is unfortunately, having been there.

SD: Some people have a sense of delineation, but the people that you don't know, it doesn't matter if they have lives or not. They're just socks walking around with a couple of buttons on.

CW: That's *so* how it is!

RUS: Well, Winter and Crow are like lowriders. It's like you have to be fucked up to be vital, actually.

CW: To be vile?

RUS: Vital. *Vital*—like the designer fizzy water.

CW: [*Crestfallen*] Oh.

I, IGNATIUS

Iggy Pop takes a Roman Holiday

It's three p.m. on the day the second Rodney King verdict is supposed to come down. The moment bristles with apocalyptic anticipation. Tea is served in the shade of a narrow awning. The publicist doesn't pay. Burrito sweat emulsifies on the cheeks of the photographer. There's honey spilled on the table, caustic sunlight billowing through tears in the overhead canvas. Our backs aim at the park, its low canopy of trees, the asphalt grey and buckled like rhinoceros skin. The newly reseeded lawns steam with voices. In this atmosphere, the bookends of possibility teeter, the membrane of reality can be lanced and everything will flow.

Iggy Pop pours his eyes over the rim of his sunglasses, studies the purple zygote that quivers like an unhoused brain at the center of the table. Five minutes before this thing had angled in from the sky, hit our table, and made its surprising promise: "Choose a man, any man, and I will give him to you: the voice of history." Then it quivered like aspic and swallowed its own orifice.

"Do you think we can get Edward Gibbon down here?" Iggy asks. No response—just a few stray crackles of electricity.

by David Turin

Iggy looks at us quizzically, reaches out, pokes the thing with his front door key. "Maybe Gibbon's too fat—can't make it through the portal." He wants Gibbon because he's re-reading Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. *He's had an American epiphany. He's comparing and contrasting. He's recorded a seven-minute jam entitled "Caesar" on his new album,* American Caesar.

Suddenly the thing sputters, reveals an aperture, swivels, a crusted, cranky eye now turned on the photographer. Inadvertently, he drops his fork.

"Hey, can we get Edward Gibbon down here or not?" repeats Iggy.

"Sorry, he's too fat for the time portal," says the thing.

"Well... how about Augustus Caesar?"

"Can do." Somewhere far off, a lightning bolt hurtles through space.

Original photo by Chris Cuffaro, photo illustration by Matt Abarbanel

IGGY POP: I've been reading Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* because I was interested in…

AUGUSTUS CAESAR: [*Proudly*] Decline and fall? Rome's longevity as an imperial power certifies its greatness.

IGGY: Right. But how did you run that thing? Basically we've got one now. I mean, this is the center of the current world empire. I wanted to see how these things run. I thought Rome would be simpler to look at because you didn't have technology yet. Gibbon points out that up until Judaism and Christianity, all the various tribes and kingdoms in the known world respected each other's religions. In other words, you guys [*to Augustus*] would go beat the shit out of the Visigoths and then they'd say, "OK, tell you what were going to do. We're going to have a Roman city over here in the middle of Gaul and you can have your Visigoth gods, you can worship over there, and we'll worship our Roman gods over here. Hey, what's the name of your god anyway?" "His name is Thor…"

AUGUSTUS: Thor. I recall no Thor gods on the register.

MONDO 2000: After your time.

IGGY: …or Thorgaar or something. Thorgaar, he's pretty cool, tell us about him.

AUGUSTUS: Cool?

IGGY: Yeah, impressive, good… you know. Anyway, you guys would say: "We've got this god Jupiter, he's like this," and you would respect one another's religions and even enjoy them. Only the Jews were exclusive, saying "None of these are real, this is all BS, there's only Yahweh." But they didn't try to proselytize. They were not an evangelical religion. Christianity came along and inherited that attitude from Judaism but took it one step further by taking it to the street. They got very unpopular with the Roman Empire on feast days—"Hey, who are these guys on the street who won't feast?" They were the party-poopers of the Roman Empire.

AUGUSTUS: I'll say. Such poopers. Are they still around?

M2: Sort of, I guess.

IGGY: They brought the persecution on themselves. They saw all aspects of life in terms Christianity or non-Christianity.

AUGUSTUS: I'll say, those guys were worse than the Goths.

IGGY: It's kind of like how they market alternative music now—"Well, you've got to dress alternative, eat alternative food, you've got to listen to alternative bands. You can't go out and get coked-up and trashed and all that stuff." Fuck that.

M2: If you'll forgive my saying, Augustus…

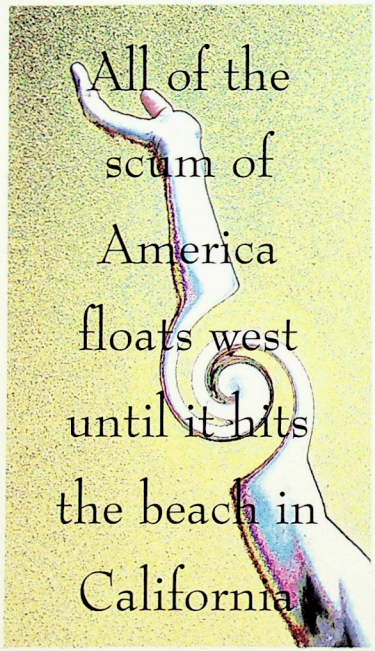
AUGUSTUS: Gus, please.

M2: Well, Gus, the early Christians just turned out to be better politicians than the Romans. The Christians were smart enough to build their churches on ancient pagan ritual sites.

IGGY: The Vatican is built on the site where Nero used to torture the Christians. For parties at night he'd douse them with flammables and then set them on fire for torch lights.

M2: Madness is such a good political statement.

AUGUSTUS: Nero was… well, he was impulsive. Not a bad man, really, just determined to confound, to imprint on the mind of Rome that rulership had no divine author and therefore no boundaries.



IGGY: Basically, he built a tasteless palace in the middle of Rome and that's what really got him.

AUGUSTUS: Oh, I wish that hadn't happened.

IGGY: That's what really brought him down. "Nero's house is out of line," you know. Do you remember the one on Sunset Boulevard?

M2: Oh yeah, the one that burnt down.

AUGUSTUS: You mean that Rome has been reborn in California?

IGGY: Yeah. In Beverly Hills, the real life is very Ay-rab. They have their little whores from all over America that congregate there wanting to get in the movies, and they have their potentates who can confer immediate membership. It's such a shame that so many people delude themselves into thinking that being on TV or in the movies is necessarily an ideal life. There's pressure on people to think that if you're not up there then you don't exist. However, they fall like lemmings for anything the TV people dangle. I think that'll break down now that the broadcast is getting more diverse—500 channels.

M2: I don't know what it was like in your day Gus, but nowadays TV dictates the consensus reality of the youth culture—how to be young, how to deal with AIDS. "Did you see *Melrose Place* last night?" becomes an answer rather than a question.

AUGUSTUS: It was the same thing when I was growing up, only we had it with poetry.

IGGY: I had that too when I was in high school. With me it was *American Bandstand* or the Beatles. They told you how to *be*. And for me, I kept bottling it up until I was about 19 or 20 and then I said "NO!—I'm going to do this and this and this." I started listening to music I liked because I liked it, and started sleeping in because I didn't want to get up. I grew up in Ann Arbor, which is a cultural crossroads between NYU and Berkeley. The University of Michigan is there. For the midwest, it's very ahead. I was 18 years old and I would hear, "Well, last night somebody played the cello nude with her feet tied." So John Cage kind of things were going on. I got a lot of useful stuff out of that. Then flower power hit. I never bought that. I took acid. I wanted to make noise and fuck, basically. Especially on stage. Or just in general life. There was another whole aesthetic coming out of Detroit because they made the motorized vehicle and you had all the Motown stuff. It was packaged as pop music. The culture behind it—if you actually walked the streets of Detroit—was like a Clint Eastwood movie starring black people. All the guys had their eyes narrowed all the time. All the chicks, everybody was *baaad*. "Bad" was the operative word. Everything had to be bad. So I picked up on that.

Matt Abarbanel

M2: What did that do to your dreams?

AUGUSTUS: Who would care about dreams?

IGGY: He means sleeping dreams. I used to have a lot of recurrent ones. I'm in a river. I'm floating down the river and the river starts going faster and faster and all of a sudden there's a hippopotamus and I go faster, there's two hippopotamuses

AUGUSTUS: Hippopotami—one hippopotamus, two hippopotami. It's a Latin root.

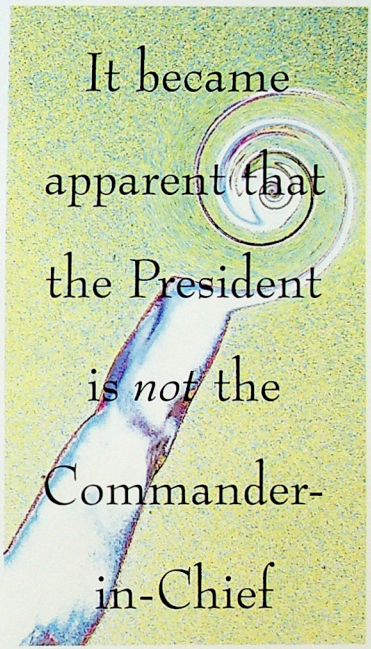
IGGY: Actually, either way is correct. I looked it up. Anyway, there's a lot of hippopotamuses. And then I'm surrounded by hippopotami

and the raft I'm on is about to fall over and I wake up. Another one I used to have is: I'm on a kind of moonscape except there's a lake and the lake is pale red and on the various beaches and little sandy islands in the lake there's junk lying around and I'm swimming and I keep half-realizing that this red stuff might be blood but I'm not sure. I don't have these anymore—is that suspicious? Another one I used to have is I was playing by the railroad tracks where I wasn't supposed to play when I was a kid and my father comes looking for me with an old western-style six gun. He's coming to hunt me down. I used to have that a lot. They made me anxious. What I have now always are more those standard, horrible, whatever-it-was-you-were-doing-yesterday-that-you-haven't-worked-out-yet dreams. I still get wet dreams every once in a while.

AUGUSTUS: I have one where I'm chased by a walrus into a turquoise palace he owns and we sit with his Egyptian concubine wife and drink tea and watch his spear collection float past the window and bury itself in the sand.

M2: So, do you think Gibbon's book is an attempt to make sense of a continuum in history?

IGGY: It's a really interesting book because the copyright is from the year America was born—1776. In other words, it was like he was trying to sum up. He was English. England was the direct heir of the Greco-Roman tradition. America then inherited that whole ball. Right when he was nailing that down and saying "Okay, this is what Empire meant," we were saying "We're taking that one step further." We took a little bit from French Republicanism where they have liberty, equality, fraternity, and we have life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We zeroed in on "liberty" as the key word. And dedicated ourselves to the reckless pursuit of happiness. I think people came over here and—like any other colonizers—they were free to do whatever the hell they wanted, and they just got used to it.



Matt Markovel

M2: The western frontier was always about the desire to construct Utopia out of the memory of Eden. But then the frontier always hardens into civilization and squeezes the iconoclasts into the wilderness. Rome was once about Utopia and then it hardened and the discontents pollinated Europe and when that hardened, America was pollinated. So Empire is simultaneously about the establishment of paradise and the failure of the establishment. The problem now is that there is no more West.

IGGY: I had a vision, on my new album. While we were dicking around one day, one guy started playing a riff on a guitar that sounded like Roman music to me and I went off. I don't know where it came from but I came up with this kind of soliloquy that's halfway between the history a high school graduate would know and a cheap gladiator movie with myself as Caesar.

AUGUSTUS: I am Caesar.

IGGY: Yes, but I was imagining. "Hail Caesar"—big voice and everything. It went on about seven minutes...

AUGUSTUS: But I'll not stand for that.

IGGY: Gus, it's just a recording... one of the best things I've ever recorded. I haven't finished the Gibbon yet. My wife got me a copy, because of that. I had read it once in paperback a long time ago. After Julius, when you came in...

AUGUSTUS: Julius was here before me?

IGGY: No, in the book. You stopped trying to expand the empire. You started playing defensive and you can't do that with that kind of empire. It's like our military now. Why did they go to Somalia? They went to practice. They want to practice fucking with things. That's why they're in Bosnia now. They can practice flying. They have to use the stuff, basically.

M2: Modern historians find some faults with Gibbon, but still hold tight to his philosophy of empire.

IGGY: It totally pertains. You could see it when the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Army said "We're going to have gays in the army," and the general said "Don't you want to rethink that?" It became apparent that the President is *not* really the Commander-in-Chief. You can't just give an order. It's not like it is on paper. There are a lot of very powerful factions in this country and that's what they had in Rome. They had a republican system until their empire got too large and too rich and then at that point it was time to have a strong ruler. The one thing Gibbon does have to say about Caligula, Claudius—all the guys, Nero especially—is that the first Caesars were very careful to preserve the appearance of a republican system. They'd say "Romans, you can be proud that you are free," but they weren't really free. Or "I will bow to the will of the Senate," but then go behind the scenes and tell the Senate what to vote and if they didn't, somebody would die. Today you have the same sort of thing. This is supposed to be a democratic system, yet we have Presidents getting killed.

M2: Does he give proletarian portraits as well?

AUGUSTUS: Of course not... why would he?

IGGY: He paints a beautiful picture of Rome. He points out that on the streets of Rome very few people were actually Roman. By the time the Empire was really booming the vast majority of people were subjects from all over the Empire who were either given free rein or a bigger home as a reward, or maybe they were there on trade. You didn't just have Roman temples. You had the Egyptian temples. You had temples for all the various minor chieftains who would pledge allegiance. As far as daily life, he talks a lot about the military and the amazing discipline these guys had to live under. They'd stay on their campus—what they called their military camp—and even when they were in Rome they'd be sleeping at their campus on the ground on a rude mat, and then they'd be up all day practicing the arts of war, and once in a while doing public works. Once the Caesars got in, they would put on huge circuses to keep public sentiment on their side against the Senate. The circuses usually celebrated either a great military victory or a coronation. They did things like uproot part of a large forest and put it in one of the circuses and then let loose wild animals in the "forest." They'd let something loose and somebody would kill it for the crowd's amusement. In one circus they let loose 300 wild stags, 10 giraffes, five lions, zebras, monkeys...

AUGUSTUS: Tapirs too...

M2: That's L.A.!

IGGY: Yeah, it's all very L.A. What happens always, inevitably, is you take over somebody and then they come and live in *your* country. The English have the same thing now. You go to London and you see people from all over their empire. Sri Lankans, Pakistanis, Carribeans...

M2: But that could be because the British abdicated their empire.

IGGY: Did they? [*pensively*] I think you could almost make the case that they're more the center of our empire than we are—because of the language. English is the pre-eminent language in this world, and it's not ours. We don't speak it well. You really notice that if you go there. They have a command of their language that allows them to think in a manner of organization that's hard for us. In a way, language is a computer. Or a virus, as Burroughs says. And proper English enables a type of apprehensive ability that I'd love to have. That's one reason I read—to keep from going totally mad. Because I hang out with musicians a lot, I get very non-verbal.

AUGUSTUS: But why would you think that a country could rule you invisibly without fist, mail, or sword?

IGGY: Because of the language and because the English are the source of our manners. I think this country is still like a kid. We're the policeman of the world—big, overweight, a little slow, still looking for orders from somebody. In a funny way, our manners still come from England. That's why we try to make kings out of our presidents. That's why the good-looking, taller candidate generally wins.

M2: England gets us hooked with quiet infusions of culture. *Upstairs, Downstairs*—or affectionate looks at the Raj. The Rhodes Scholarship. Did you know that every Rhodes Scholar signs a loyalty oath to the Queen?

IGGY: Really? Culturally they manipulate us, yeah. And they've got a cultural edge over us. They've certainly made inroads into rock 'n' roll.

M2: But you'd never get the Stooges coming out of England or a Burroughs or a Coraghessan Boyle.

IGGY: No. They wouldn't have the guts. Put it this way. There's a lot that's ours right now, but they're always there in the wings whispering.

M2: So, in the context of Empire, what do you think of L.A.?

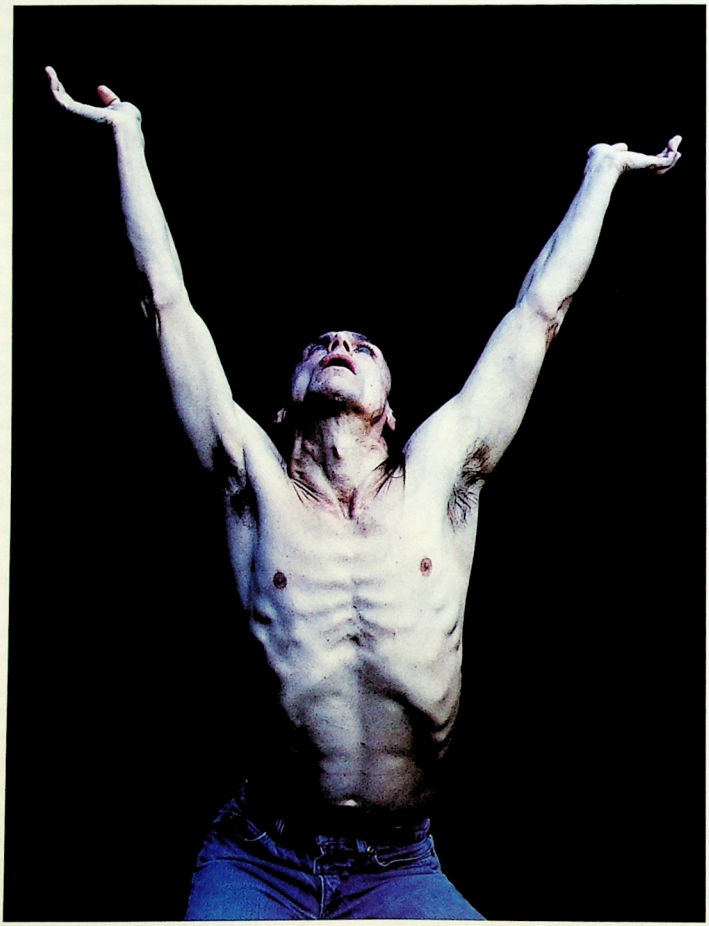
AUGUSTUS: Haven't we already covered this?

M2: Thoreau says that on the shores of California westward expansion would grind to a halt and that would do something drastic to the consciousness of civilization.

IGGY: We've hit the beach. I wrote about that. I have a song called "Kill City"—a little understood song. The operative line is "I live in Kill City where the debris meets the sea." I've always believed that if you envision the sea as the land and the land as the sea—all of the scum of America floats west until it hits the beach in California. It all just floats there and everything flops. Thoreau has got a point.

AUGUSTUS: So what's the next Rome, after California?

IGGY: I think the Mexicans have got a great future. They're family-oriented and they have a quiet, relentless energy about them. They're going to keep pushing and they're going to get places.



AUGUSTUS: And America?

IGGY: The frontier has gone as far west as it can go, but I think there is still going to be a frontier. The new frontier will be in becoming more tolerant. It's been a surface thing since everybody started growing their hair long and smoking pot. Thirty years ago you'd get challenged for long hair where I came from—challenged and very possibly beaten. Now you would have to be gay to get beaten. Hopefully in another thirty years you won't get beaten for that.

M2: Maybe then you'll get beaten for having a rhinoceros-colored carpet in your house.

IGGY: Or maybe for being white. That's very possible.

M2: What happened with the King verdict?

IGGY: It never came down.

AUGUSTUS: Hey, I forgot, I'm supposed to be on that panel... I've got to go.

IGGY: Yeah, get going. I'm really hoping it comes down soon because I'm hoping to fly through there.

AUGUSTUS: Arrivederci!

IGGY: See ya, buddy.

M2: Where would you see yourself in Gibbon's Rome?

IGGY: Oh, I would probably be some sort of a versifier. They had a lot of poets and versifiers. Or an orator. I wouldn't be surprised if I was in politics. Although I might be in the army because I'm not of high birth. Usually the guys in the real political positions were from good families. So all things being equal, I'd probably be in some administrative position in the army. Or probably doing something with my mouth, because I'm really good with that. M2

Stephen Stickler

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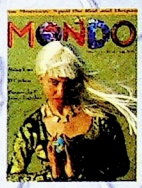

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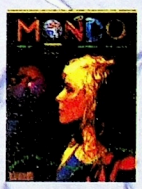

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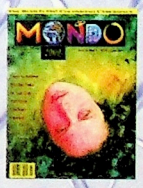

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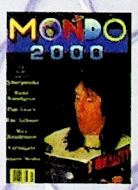

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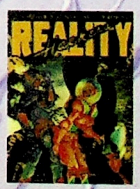

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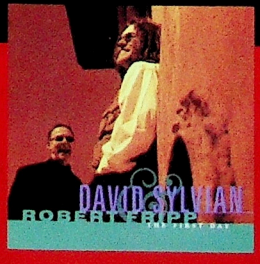

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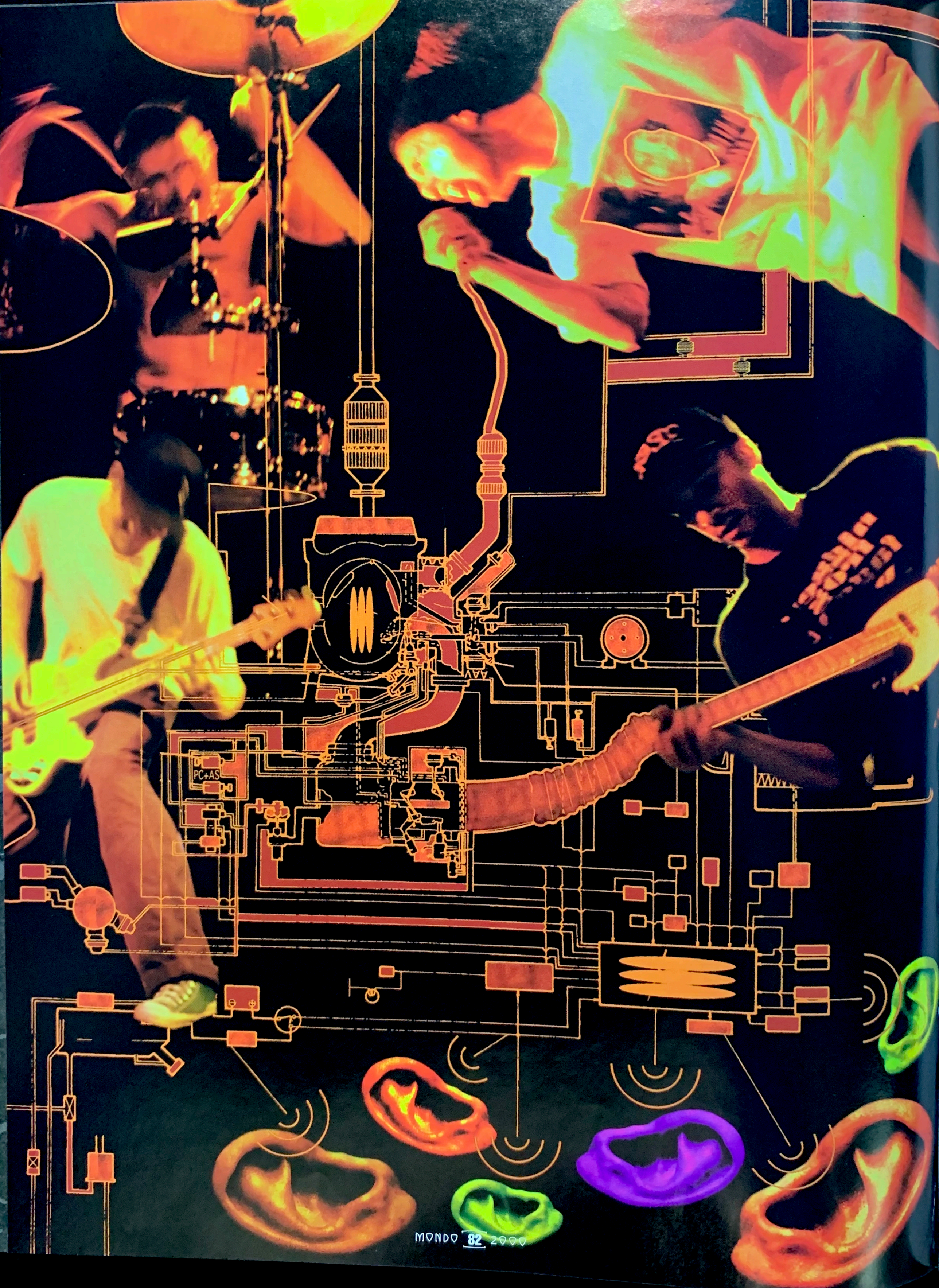
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STRAIGHT OUTTA LIBERTYVILLE

Rage against the Machine

by Madeleine Brand

Only a handful of bands change the political vocabularies of their listeners. The Sex Pistols brought "anarchy" home to 70's suburbs. Public Enemy taught the 80's to "fight the power." And in the 90's, our media-feed reality may be rephrased by Rage against the Machine. Consider "Bullet in the Head," from their debut album—singer Zack de la Rocha's take on the Gulf War, when we were all victims of the "in-house drive-by."

The members of Rage claim influences from Fugazi to Public Enemy to Metallica, and their aggro punk-rap hybrid has drawn hardcore audiences, as well as a guest spot on the latest Run-DMC album. Formed a year and a half ago in Los Angeles, they were immediately adopted by Epic, a division of Sony. Guitar player Tom Morello, 28 and Harvard-educated, says their biggest fear is becoming part of the Machine—revolution as fashion statement. Their trick will be to use the music industry and not be *used, sowing the seeds of rebellion in even the most phlegmatic of audiences. Morello took a break from their U.S. tour to spell out their message.*

—Madeleine Brand

Pito Cellas

MONDO 2000: When you formed Rage against the Machine, did you all have the same political sensibilities?

TOM MORELLO: That was the most important thing. I was jamming with a lot of people who were talented, but whose aspirations reached no further than the next weekend and the next six-pack. It was a pleasure to run into people who were as angry as me about the gross social and economic injustices in our society. It was great to hook up with Zack, who has a brilliant voice for putting them in terms of real personal politics.

M2: OK for the rage. And the "Machine" is...?

TM: Anything from the local police who drag motorists from their cars, beat them to a pulp and get away with it—to the overall corporate bureaucracy.

M2: You're very humble about your appeal, but listening to your music, with the metal-rap combination, you might be huge.

TM: I think domestically we've sold fewer records than Junkyard. We seem to do very well in small pacifist islands. We have the number one record in Iceland and it's almost gold in New Zealand, so we're thinking about targeting Mozambique for a big marketing campaign. [*laughs*]

We've sold twice as many records in Europe than we have in the States, and I think it has a lot to do with less censorship in places like Germany and the Netherlands, so there's more radio and video access. We did a video for "Killing in the Name," but there's no outlet for it here because it has sixteen "fuck yous" and one "motherfucker," which is definitely going to undermine the moral fiber of our country. Thank goodness for the FCC. The whole censorship thing is such a crime. The right-wing fundamentalist organizations are so overwrought over the undermining of the moral fiber of our society because of rock and rap lyrics. If they had any true interest in helping young people to grow up in a decent environment the first issue on their minds would be parental abuse and neglect, which goes on in about 40 percent of teenagers' lives. People don't want to admit that kids might have more to fear from their own parents than from an N.W.A. record.

M2: Who comes to your shows?

TM: A pretty diverse crowd. In the last five years, the partitions between musical genres have come crumbling down. It used to be taboo to have a Metallica tape, a Fugazi tape, and a Public Enemy tape in your case next to one another, and the audiences were mutually exclusive. To a certain extent those walls have crumbled, which is fortunate for us because our music combines elements of all three of those bands, and our audience is representative of that. We have a sizeable hip-hop contingent as well as a hardcore crowd and the vast assortment in between.

Rage against the Machine
Clockwise from upper left: Tom Morello, Zack De La Rocha, Brad Wilk and Timmy C.

Pito Colla

M2: But you didn't sit down intentionally and say, "We are going to be a crossover band."

TM: Oh good heavens no! The development of this band is completely organic. Its spirit is really that of a punk band, before punk became a narrow dress and music code. We freely mix Sabbath-like riffs with Terminator X-like grooves with industrial intensity with hardcore aggression. The only part that was calculated was that we didn't want it to be a white-boy funk Chili Pepper sound. I like the Chili Peppers a lot, but the hundred thousand clone bands they've created have really been a plague on our nation. [*laughs*] If I walk into another club and see another bunch of young, dreadlocked white guys in long shorts leaping around making funny faces while slapping the bass a mile a minute, I'm just going to expire! [*laughs*]

M2: Well that's part of the whole MTV-isation of our culture. And you address television's influence in some of your songs, particularly "Bullet in the Head" which is about the Gulf War.

TM: One of the leaflets we pass out at our shows talks about how the war statistics were presented, and it draws excerpts from the *New York Times*, where they would list United Nations' casualties, and it would list 6 dead, 50 wounded and five captured and then it would list Iraqi casualties, and it would say 200 tanks destroyed, 300 personnel carriers destroyed, and 15 rocket launcher bases destroyed, completely evading the obvious—the fact that we were over there *killing*. The civilian death toll was much higher than was presented. Even the non-civilian death toll, which was very important in galvanizing public opinion against the war, was just hidden from us.

M2: Your music advocates fighting the system. Should it be done from within or without?

TM: I used to work for Senator Alan Cranston, one of the more progressive members of Congress, and that was my last-ditch effort to see if there could be some positive change made from within. Even if you're a politician with a progressive bent, you have to basically mortgage your soul in order to stay in office. I have very little hope in any substantive change coming from above, and history in this country bears that out. The Civil Rights Movement is a perfect example. There wasn't any real legislation until nonviolent protesters put their lives on the line and provoked racist violence to embarrass America in front of the world.

M2: You're on Sony—a huge corporate monolith—and if you become big then you *will* become part of the Machine.

TM: We had pretty much the full range of options when it came to record companies from the smallest indie to Madonna's label. And the reason we chose Epic was this: most bands have two agendas, an artistic agenda and a commercial agenda. We have a political agenda as well. And the political agenda means reaching people. The reason we went with Epic is because of their distribution. There are a lot of angry young people in rural Kentucky and in Stockholm and in Prague as well as around Chicago where I grew up. As a teenager in Libertyville, Illinois, I had to choose from the spectrum of records from Fleetwood Mac to Kiss. There was no Minor Threat—*none* of that. What we're attempting to do is what no band on an independent label has done before, which is trying to jolt the axis of power by reaching and organizing people. It's a question of finding those few people that are angry enough and intelligent enough to take it to another level.

M2: So you're not going the Fugazi route, which ends up preaching to the converted.

L.A. IS WHAT THE WORLD WILL LOOK LIKE IN 20 YEARS IF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND HAS ITS WAY

TM: Exactly. I really respect what they do and they come up in a lot of our discussions, but in Fugazi shows you end up with a lot of angry suburban white males who are all in agreement.

M2: What if you won a Grammy next year? Would you accept it?

TM: Oh, sweet mother of mercy! [*laughs*] I can't think of anything more embarrassing. It comes down to the fact that the Grammys are just stupid, just butt-stupid. I might crash some Grammy parties, but beyond that...

M2: I don't know if you're familiar with George Herbert Mead, but he said something like, "Capitalism has the unique ability to subsume all revolution," as in MTV's slogan "The (music) revolution will be televised." Do you think that maybe you guys will just end up being a fashion statement?

TM: We're trying to outflank that possibility. I think the way to do that is to make sure that your activism extends beyond the realm of entertainment. We're going to incorporate some real street-level activism so that our grassroots work is not just ranting to underground rock magazines. There's a radio show, Zack has a community project thing in L.A., and I'm working on a book.

M2: What's the book about?

TM: The working title is "Heroes for Beginners."

It's sort of a historical primer for the MTV generation that will feature short biographies of important role models that are excluded from our history books or whose importance is downplayed, like Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, and Ché Guevara. In my high school history book there was *one paragraph* on Malcolm X and that was no accident. People need to find alternative sources of information in order to make up their own minds, rather than having their minds made up for them by Tom Brokaw.

M2: So what are we, the poor slobs outside the system, supposed to do?

WE SEEM TO DO VERY WELL IN SMALL PACIFIST ISLANDS

TM: [*Laughs*] The first step is to seek alternative sources of information. In our shows, for example, we're passing out information pamphlets. There's a very narrow corporate ownership of the mass media with a vested interest in maintaining control. What you tend to get is disinformation and propaganda, as opposed to a balanced relaying of the facts.

So we're passing out pamphlets on media manipulation of public opinion on South Africa, the Democratic Party, Somalia, and Desert Storm. And another pamphlet on an organization called Parents for Rock and Rap, which is an anti-censorship group that takes on the PMRC wherever they rear their ugly head. And finally a pamphlet on the Leonard Peltier case, which is not so much a symbol of 500 years of oppression of Native Americans as it is just the right thing to do to get this guy out of jail.

M2: What do you think of Time-Warner dropping Ice-T?

TM: It comes as no surprise that a conglomerate like Time Warner cares more about what the shareholders think than what the First Amendment says. It may become a trend; a lot of bands may fall off that corporate cliff. I look forward to the day when we have a song that has the kind of impact that "Cop Killer" did. Tell me, when was the last time a song focused the world's attention on the subject of police brutality? I have all the respect in the world for Ice-T, except for the misogyny in some of his songs, but it would have been more punk rock to leave the song on the record and donate the proceeds to the families of people who have been killed by police officers.

M2: With a new President and talk of change, are you optimistic or cynical about the future?

TM: Cynical with a capital C. As long as the presidential candidates receive 75% of their campaign contributions from major corporations, it's almost immaterial who the puppet is: the puppet-master remains the same. Clinton owes nothing to the homeless. He may owe a lot to Exxon, Dow-Corning and whoever else has decided their interests would be better furthered by a Democratic administration.

M2: But you're not giving up.

TM: I'm a cynic—not a pessimist. History is rife with examples of small groups of people making substantive impact, progressive thinking people applying a little anger and intellect. Do you know about an organization called the Los Angeles Poverty Department? It provides not just a shelter but a gallery and a stage for the homeless to present their art, read their poetry, do performance art. They're trying to establish a bridge between their artistic community on Skid Row and the underground rock community—where there's a lot of sympathy, but a real dissociation from the reality. So bands are going to start playing at this venue, not only to make money for the organization so they can stay open more nights, but also to have a cultural exchange.

M2: Where do you get your information?

TM: Different places. I've got subscriptions to alternative papers like *The Nation* and *EXTRA!* and now I'm reading *The People's History of the United States* [*by Howard Zinn*], which looks at history from the perspective of slaves and indentured servants. The "We the People" in the Constitution was never meant to include black slaves, Native Americans, women, non-landowners or the poor. Foreground that in our history books and you'll get a whole different perspective on the history of our country.

M2: You live in Los Angeles. What are your feelings about the growing apartheid in that city, particularly after last year's riots?

TM: My lasting impression of that event was that, much like the Gulf War, it was really twisted and manipulated by the media. The fact that they called it "riots" implied this sort of random, undirected violence, as opposed to a reaction to a specific miscarriage of justice by the court system. Obviously, it was a bit of theater, a little *mise-en-scène* for all those folks out in television land, to justify the instigation of Martial Law.

M2: What do you think of Los Angeles?

TM: It's kind of grim. But there's more than just smog in the atmosphere. You see, L.A. is what the world will look like in the next 20 years if the International Monetary Fund has its way. Mini-malls

and Kathy Ireland Budweiser ads from one time-zone to the next. We just got back from a tour in Europe, where I visited what's left of the Berlin Wall. As you're looking toward what was East Berlin, on one corner of the Wall is painted the number of people who were killed trying to escape from East to West to "freedom." Now about four feet behind that is this huge sign for a Toyota dealership. The ironic thing is that in the middle of a Wednesday afternoon *no one was shopping*. These people were duped by episodes of *Dallas* and *Dynasty* and Radio Free Europe into thinking that now they'd be living high on the hog. Now they're reaping all the benefits of capitalism from illiteracy to unemployment to recession.

M2: You stress on your liner notes that no samples were used in the recording. Why is that important to you?

TM: There are sounds in our music that you could mistake for samples, keyboards, or synthesizers if we didn't point that out. I have a lot of respect for artists who incorporate samples in their music; it's just not what we do. We draw from the sonic spectrum of hip-hop and industrial and from as-yet-unexplored sonic spectrums—but we do it all in the context of a punk rock band. With hard rock in the 70's you had to have the Les Paul guitar and the big wall of Marshall stacks—making rock was expensive. It wasn't something that the average working class kid could afford.

Then punk came and demolished all that—said all you need is a beat-up guitar and a tiny amplifier, a couple chords and a few words of the truth to make music as powerful as anything that had come before. Rap took that one step further and said you don't even need guitars and amplifiers; you just need a couple turntables, some old records and those few words of truth. I think that the most important revolution in music in the last 20 years was the emergence of hip-hop and samples in music. So, hats off to bands that incorporate samples; it's just not what you're hearing from us.

M2: You sort of eschew wall of sound guitar-solo masturbation. Is that, like Gang of Four, done intentionally to make the band democratic?

TM: I'm not sure we completely eschew it. [*laughs*] We certainly don't have the interminable 25 minute blues exploratory wanking that goes on, but we certainly have more guitar solos than the Sex Pistols did. There's a lot of suburban angst that you can let leak out of the guitar, and I've got no problem incorporating that.

M2: What do you think of the growing computerization that seems to be engulfing our society?

TM: I can see science fiction horror fantasies about virtual reality becoming the new television, the latest in a long line of opiates, sort of the candy-for-all-offenses. And given the people who are in charge of that candy, it's likely that it will have the same value structure as all the previous mass opiates have had—television, religion, or whatever—and that is to maintain order, maintain the status quo and keep people calm and complacent.

M2: On the other hand, it *is* being used for grass-roots movements via modems.

TM: That's true only if the people can afford the technology.

M2: How was playing Lollapalooza?

TM: It was exciting for me because Babes in Toyland and Tool were there. Each band has one of my best friends from high school in Libertyville, Illinois.

M2: So, Libertyville will be the next Seattle?

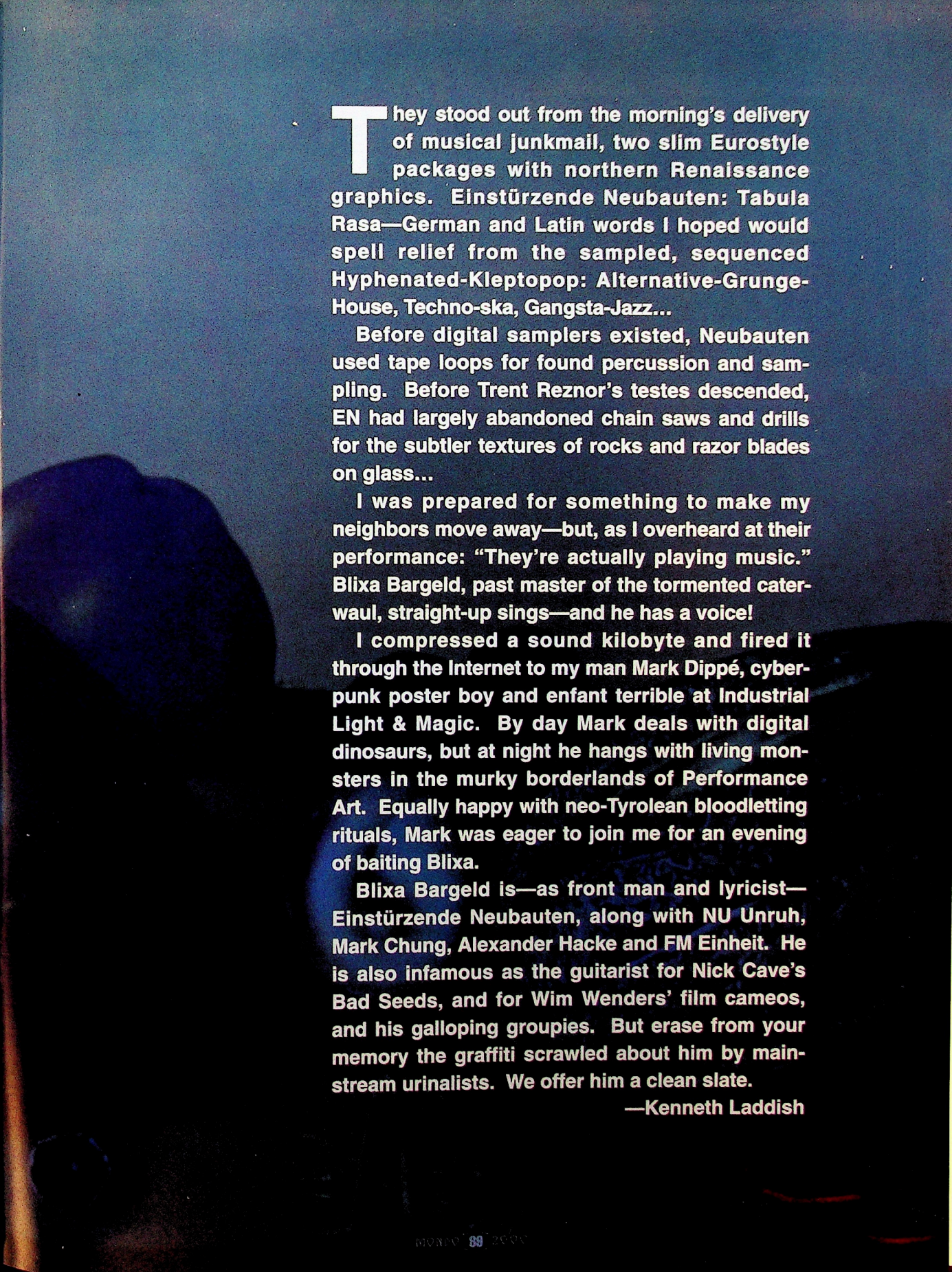
TM: [*Laughs*] Yeah. A&R guys will be getting out their maps and following the chain of Oldsmobile dealerships to Libertyville. They'll be lurking in the bushes. Scary! M2

Pito Colla

Blixa Einstűrzende:

Bargeld Harassed

by Kenneth Laddish and Mark Dippé



They stood out from the morning's delivery of musical junkmail, two slim Eurostyle packages with northern Renaissance graphics. Einstürzende Neubauten: Tabula Rasa—German and Latin words I hoped would spell relief from the sampled, sequenced Hyphenated-Kleptopop: Alternative-Grunge-House, Techno-ska, Gangsta-Jazz...

Before digital samplers existed, Neubauten used tape loops for found percussion and sampling. Before Trent Reznor's testes descended, EN had largely abandoned chain saws and drills for the subtler textures of rocks and razor blades on glass...

I was prepared for something to make my neighbors move away—but, as I overheard at their performance: "They're actually playing music." Blixa Bargeld, past master of the tormented caterwaul, straight-up sings—and he has a voice!

I compressed a sound kilobyte and fired it through the Internet to my man Mark Dippé, cyberpunk poster boy and enfant terrible at Industrial Light & Magic. By day Mark deals with digital dinosaurs, but at night he hangs with living monsters in the murky borderlands of Performance Art. Equally happy with neo-Tyrolean bloodletting rituals, Mark was eager to join me for an evening of baiting Blixa.

Blixa Bargeld is—as front man and lyricist—Einstürzende Neubauten, along with NU Unruh, Mark Chung, Alexander Hacke and FM Einheit. He is also infamous as the guitarist for Nick Cave's Bad Seeds, and for Wim Wenders' film cameos, and his galloping groupies. But erase from your memory the graffiti scrawled about him by mainstream urinalists. We offer him a clean slate.

—Kenneth Laddish

TABULA RASA

We meet Herr Bargeld for dinner at his rock 'n' roll motel. He is ineffably pale in an ebony suit, smoking contemplatively, affecting not to see us. He is Bowie's Thin White Duke, or perhaps a never-aging St. Germain. More like Huysmans' des Esseintes than Dieter from Sprockets. A vampire-poet, an undead monochrome dandy. We exchange introductions and welcome him to our city. He does not offer his hand.

MONDO 2000: Blixa, I know you hate journalists. That's OK: I hate popstars. But we're not journalists—and while you're certainly a star, I don't think your music has ever been exactly popular.

BLIXA BARGELD: I don't hate journalists; I hate what they write. What do you have against popstars?

M2: How do you talk with people who have nothing to say? But your *Tabula Rasa* IS a statement. And its music, text and graphics harmonize perfectly. Is it intentionally a *Gesamtkunstwerk*?

BB: Definitely—but you should see the European original. It's part of a three-record set: *Interim*, *Tabula Rasa* and *Malediction*. We were lucky to get *Tabula* produced even approaching the quality of the original. The American *Interim* is a highly abridged EP. Mute has promised to release *Malediction*, but not as we originally conceived it...

MARK DIPPÉ: It's good to holler about things like this in print: conditions might improve.

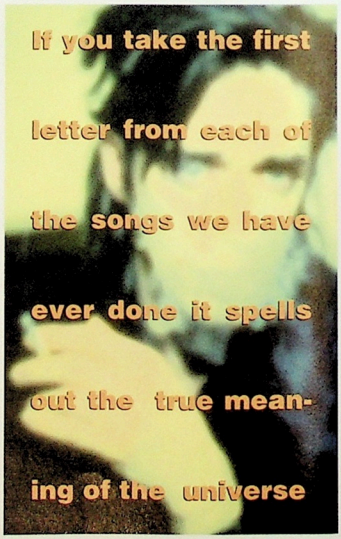
M2: Unless Mute is also deaf! This record is a departure from your earlier work, often called "unlistenable." Compared to Grunge and Grindcore it's almost Easy Listening. Does *Tabula Rasa* represent a new musical beginning?

BB: Not in the sense that we erase our past. *Tabula Rasa* references our new label. It also refers to our liberation from Some Bizarre, who didn't pay us for 7 years—our eternal suit against them was finally settled in our favor... though we still haven't received a penny. *Tabula Rasa* is also simply a beautiful expression.

STILLEBENSRAUM

MD: I like the Renaissance *stilleben* [still-life] references in the artwork—triple entendre, visual puns... Strange, perverse happenings here?

BB: Our working title for the project was *Still-Life with Explosives*, and this concept wormed its way into every aspect of the production. Within the formal methodology of the still-life, the table—tabula, tableau—represents the



Miranda Penn Tuan

Einstürzende Neubauten

Original photo by Fritz Brinckmann, altered by Andrew Hathaway. Headline by Andrew Hathaway

universe... The various elements en tableau—fruit, flowers, or rotting meat—are always symbols, metaphors. Have you seen our fly? No? The circular ridges which CD disks snap onto are called "spiders" in the industry. Have a look at ours...

M2: A fly! An Old Master fly inside the "spider." Leave no turn unstoned... Only master craftsmen and serious speedfreaks...

BB: There is a different fly for each album of the trilogy. They come from the still-life by Ambrosius Bosschaert the Younger reproduced on the front cover.

STILL HERMETIC AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

MD: This imagery really speaks to me: overripe half-eaten fruit crawling with flies, a glass of wine and a locust. It radiates pestilence... Hey! There are wires sticking out of this cantaloupe!

BB: I have embedded perhaps a dozen puzzles into the record, with all the clues an intelligent person needs to solve them. I know our new material seems more accessible, but that is only on the surface. It remains elitist and hermetic underneath. Why do we have a song called "Zebulon"? One of the songs is a palindrome. Did you know that if you take the first letter from each of the songs we have ever done it spells out the true meaning of the universe?

M2: Really?

BB: No, but I will tell you that the work is composed of many independent fragments, particles that go in different directions. This interview is itself one of these particles. The idea of the "Opus"—a complete work, created in a vacuum, unchanged 'til the end of the world—is anachronistic. We wanted to do something totally dynamic: a still-life that explodes in different directions.

M2: When you hear the word "industrial," do you reach for your potato gun?

BB: This term is no longer used in other areas of the world—only in America. The whole non-existent genre was conceived by your record industry as a marketing ploy.

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M2: What arbitrary label would you prefer to have stuck to you?

BB: I think "Crossover" is good...

MD: Crossing over from what to what? FM (Einheit) classified the work as "contemporary German Folk Music."

BB: That is satisfactory. We have also called it "Hardcore New Age."

SCHWITTERING MACHINE

M2: I have always wanted to ask you: in your early work you must have really tried to avoid falling into melodies, rhythms and similar clichés.

BB: It was not difficult at all. We began in a state of pure musical naiveté, free of any cultural biases. Our music is not that unusual from the global POV—only in terms of Pop's Eurocentric harmonic chauvinism.

M2: Is EN a continuation of the prewar Atonal movement?

BB: Schoenberg, Berg, Webern... Neubauten! [*laughing*] I should say yes, and break into the huge Serialism and Chromatism market.

In truth we are much closer to Kurt Schwitters than to Arnold Schoenberg. I can tell you now that in the beginning we had absolutely no concept of music whatsoever. Our body of work records our process of self-education, which continues to this day. At first we studied sounds themselves, working with *objets trouvés*, tape loops. Later we progressed to structure, eventually coming to grasp the concept of rhythm. Now that we're discovering harmonics, I think we're doing pretty good. Melody was something we couldn't comprehend before.

M2: I've been listening to your music for years. I used to hear it as violent dadaistic catharsis. Now these same works sound highly restrained to me.

BB: Just as I predicted 10 years ago! In 1980 I said that the entire pop culture would change while we would remain the same, and that the day would come when our "noise" would sound like their new "music." A really radical change has taken place. Starting in Rap and Hip-Hop, and now everywhere there is all this noise. I am almost sick of it now that everyone is doing it.

M2: Others tend to decontextualize source material, reducing it to pure aesthetics. You seem aware of the attributes of your instruments.

BB: Yes, the semiotics. When we are at our best our sounds form sentences as surely as words, which reinforces on another level what we are trying to express. The idea of using sound, stepping away from notes, occurred to BeBop and earlier generations of the avant garde. But add to this the quality of what the instrument actually is: this *is* burning oil. Put in a certain context you compose a sentence dealing with burning oil.

PLEASE, NOT YOU TOO!

M2: Didn't Dépeche Mode sample you?

BB: Yes, for their hit "People Are People." They had the guts to admit doing it. They actually asked us to support them on their European tour, but it didn't work out. Of course now we're going to be touring with U2. [*laughter all around*]

M2: Let the record indicate that Blixa brought this up himself, without any prompting. Their name certainly comes up a lot around here...

MD: I can see it now: a couple sledge-hammers could turn their video wall into a found *orchestra*. I *love* the subtle undertones you get from exploding cathode ray tubes. You could "find" The Edge's guitar and let it do a duet with your burning oil. That might sound *gooood*...

M2: Beamed around the world with their live network feed and personal satellite uplink!

BB: I don't think they'll let us do that!

M2: Will you let them suck up all your proprietary Berlin imagery into their image processors? Turning Trabis into U2-mobiles, dancing on the ruins of the Wall like it was their healing message that brought it down! They want to sample *you*, not your music—your SOUL. The Spy Plane wants to make you a *PET GERMAN IN THEIR ZOO!*

UH OH: DIPPÉ'S DOING IT AGAIN

MD: Hey, give the guy a break. Bono is probably a hardcore Berlin kinda guy. Hangs at Bahnhof Zoo every night sharing needles with junkie prostitutes.

M2: Not! He's a good Catholic boy—Achtung Blixa, They will *fuck you over*. Like Burroughs said: "If you are doing business with a religious son-of-a-bitch, get it in writing—his word isn't worth shit, not with the Good Lord telling him how to fuck!"

BB: We just got the fax yesterday. We are supposed to open for them tomorrow in Rotterdam. The Edge seems to have requested us. We have never supported anyone before so we decided to see what it's like.

MD: What was it Breton said? That the ultimate artistic act is firing a revolver blindly into a crowd of people...

M2: Er, when you first came out, everyone was outraged—but now you attract crowds who *like* what you do. So if you're tired of preaching to the perverted, it will be great fun for you: you'll know what it's like to be hated again! These Benelux Benetton teenies will be expecting "One life, one love..." but they'll get a dose of HEADCLEANER!

BB: That *is* what they are going to get!

ALL YOU NEED IS HEADCLEANER

MD: HEADCLEANER should satisfy the fans of your early work...

BB: The original "Headcleaner" was a 45-minute live performance we did in Vienna, in a midnight procession down Vienna's closed main street.

We performed in a specially designed vehicle, a giant skeletal steel Phallus-tank. There were explosions, artificial-snow storms, huskies on conveyor belts... with us playing a version of "Headcleaner" which will never be equaled at maximum volume. Vienna is the most morbid of cities, and the text dealt with natural catastrophes, such as Pliny's account of the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. A good film was made of this event, but it has been banned. We're working on a video from this footage, which we will release over here.

M2: The transition from the prolonged tone to the wall of noise really sounds like it might be the sound of a real head-cleaning tape.

BB: It is actually two tones—the two opposed standard tunings for the note used by the Viennese and Parisian schools—played simultaneously. An allusion to the musical Cold War which divided Europe for years, with repercussions still felt to this day. Headcleaner is a metaphor for a mystical substance, a universal solvent, the Philosopher's Stone in liquid form.

M2: Cool—you mean liquid acid? Or is it some hallucinogen fresh out of Sandoz?

BB: I was speaking of an *alchemical* substance, you know? It's not the same as a *chemical* substance.

MD: Where can I find treatment for my alchemical dependency?

M2: Alchemists Anonymous?

TABLE O' RASTA

Where do pop acts stay when they play the Bay Area? The Phoenix, a piece of Hollywood real estate grafted into the heart of San Francisco's Tenderloin. It even features a Caribbean restaurant with authentic So Cal cuisine. Blixa orders a rock shrimp quesadilla.

MD: You like Jamaican food: what do you like in music?

BB: Generally I like things if I cannot tell what will happen in the next four bars. I like Henryk Gorecki, *Symphony of Mournful Songs*, third movement. He's the first contemporary composer to make it onto the English charts in a long time. And I rather like your Kronos Quartet.

M2: What do you think of Grunge?

BB: Is he from Finland? I'm surprised we are talking so much about Art.

M2: Art whom?

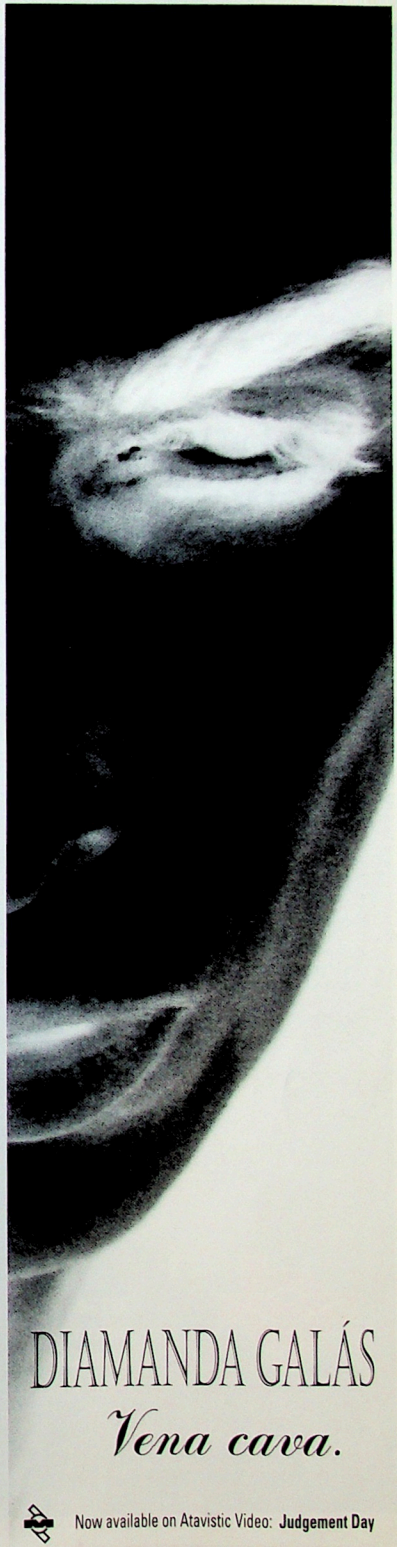
MD: Hanging out in Vienna you must know of Hermann Nitsch and Otto Muehl.

BB: Some of my favorite people are Actionists.

MD: Mine too. The Actionists' images have permeated the culture...

BB: We performed at the last Dokumenta that Joseph Bueys did. Aside from ourselves and Bueys, the thing that really touched me was the Nitsch Retrospective. It possesses a dimension I call "pressure," as in physics. What do you think of Schwarzkogler?

MD: When his pictures were first published in America, it was presented like, "Here's an artist who chopped off his own dick and bled to death for performance art." So I *had* to find out more. Which led me to Peter Weibel—I worked with him on some virtual rituals—and from him I met Nitsch. I was supposed to meet Otto Muehl but he got arrested.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SEX AND DRUGS AND REICH AND ROLL

BB: People see Schwarzkogler as a horrific character. They look at his art as S&M fantasies, but his pictures are quite beautiful. He was a true romantic. I know one of his best friends who doesn't believe he suicided. Otto's in jail right now, for supposedly having sex with minors again. It's sick really—he's a Reichian and he has two camps, one in the Alps and one in the Canary Islands, the two camps of the so-called AA commune.

MD: That's great, creating a cult as an art piece: the artist as God who demands sex from everybody...

BB: It's not like that! It's not a cult: it's based on Wilhelm Reich's thinking. The women have the only rooms and they choose whom they'll sleep with. These communes have been in existence for a long time. Somehow a video was released and used to convict Muehl. The woman judge called it the sickest thing she'd ever seen...

M2: AA? Does this have something to do with the Crowley A:A, the "Great White Brotherhood?" I could see them using Reich for cover these days. Crowley's got a bad rep.

BB: For good reason. Wilhelm Reich has nothing to do with Crowley! AA stands for something totally different! *Reich*, you know? Orgone accumulators. Bions. Vegetotherapy! And, of course, *sex*...

M2: I'm down. But Crowley... If you think Crowley was crazy, read his novel *Diary of a Drug Fiend*. And if you think Reich was *sane* read his self-suppressed *Contact with Space*.

BB: Reich's work is better known in America than in Europe, so maybe you know better. You should—it was you folks who fucking *killed* him!

REICH-KILLERS WANT TO KNOW...

M2: How did you feel about the Red Army Faction when you were growing up? I liked their hands-on-the-trigger approach to having war criminals for parents.

BB: The RAF were my heroes.

MD: Are you in a sense terrorists? Einstürzende Neubauten translates as "Collapsing New Buildings," which reminds me of J.G. Ballard's book *High-rise*. A future of 400-story politically independent superstructures, with competing cultures on different floors, like towering Bosnias. These buildings *need* to be collapsed.

BB: That's interesting, but the name Einstürzende Neubauten is not originally an anarchist slogan. It's an architectural phenomenon, like your "sick building syndrome." *Neubau* means "new built"—the official designation for postwar. Many *Neubauten* were constructed of steel-reinforced concrete; the walls are held in place by the ceilings, and the weight of the floors above stabilizes the building. But succumbing to "material stress," they are known to collapse—*einstürzende*—of themselves. The classic example of this was the Berlin Kongresshalle, which was a gift from your government. This collapsed in the first week after we formed. It seemed like a good omen.

M2: How do you feel about Berlin?

BB: I love the Potsdamerplatz—in that empty lot is a greater historical presence than anywhere I know. The Nazi Government ministries were here—gone without a trace. The Wall went straight through it, and now even *that* is gone, every last piece sold to American tourists. Of course, now it's the most valuable real estate in the world and has been bought up by Sony and Mercedes-Benz.

ALTWELTSCHMERZ

MD: Do you see WWII as a pivotal event in your psyche—that destruction?

BB: I will tell you two things about our psyche. First, I refer you to Walter Benjamin's essay on the destructive character, which he describes as handsome and friendly, whose only motto is "to create space." How do you think a destructive personality creates space? This is another tie-in to *einstürzende.*

The Neubau/Altbau dichotomy points to a historical dimension in our work. It's not architectural destruction that haunts us. It's the rift torn in the culture of Europe and especially Germany. The prewar avant-garde tradition was completely severed. There was no German tradition one could refer to without feeling guilty. That culture which existed before the war is rightly forbidden to us, because of what it led to—or at best, did not prevent. Connect the "destructive character" with this historical perspective and you have a key to our method and madness. It means that love songs are possible...

M2: You see this as uniquely German? Our avant garde was destroyed...

BB: You had Bugs Bunny before, during and after the war. The war you won. The point I am trying to make is that the German tradition is *gone.* We hate our culture and our language. All our philosophy and music was appropriated by the Nazis: Dürer, Bach, Friedrich N-Punkt! We cannot redeem that tradition. We can only re-invent. This is the only way that there can be love songs. There is a famous quotation—I believe it's Adorno—"After Auschwitz you can't write a poem anymore." He was right, in his time, in that culture. I believe the war created a space, a void that makes it possible for me to re-invent German culture out of this pure nothing.

M2: You are one of the few German artists that speaks in your own tongue.

BB: For the last 20 years they tried to make people believe that you can't do "rock" music in German. It's a cheap lie but everyone in our country seems to believe it.

BEATLESCHMERZ

MD: *You* can. "Interimsliebenden" could be the biggest German language international hit since the Beatles' "Komm gibt mir dein Hand."

BB: I can't believe you would even *mention THAT SONG* in an interview with me!

M2: Sorry, Blixa... uh, but it is a beautiful song: the words are profound. [*hastily covering his gaffe*] I think you deserve more of a reputation as a poet. This must be some of the finest contemporary verse in the German language, and it comes across well in English too.

BB: Thank you. I do have an honorary professorship in Poetics from the Vienna Academy of Arts. So I have not gone completely unnoticed.

MD: Your primary subject matter is not politics or philosophy, is it? It almost seems that all your songs relate to an emotion—uh, what is the word I am looking for... ?

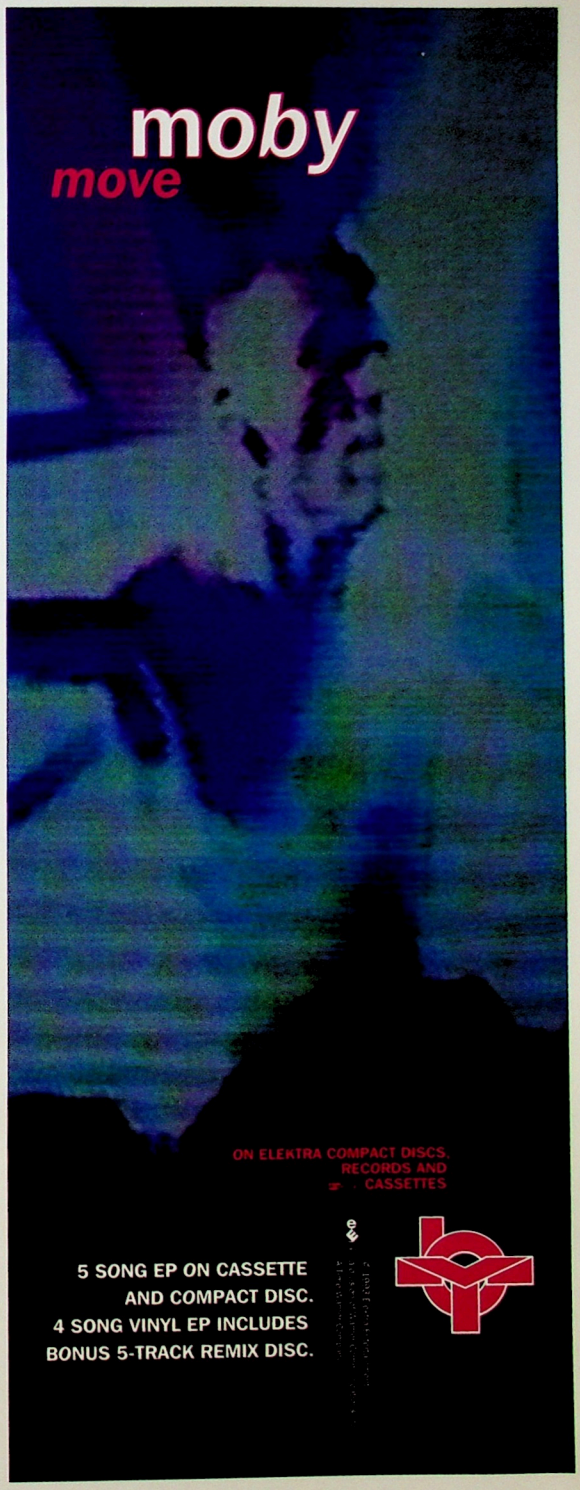
ALL YOU NEED IS...

BB: Love? I know you were ashamed to say the word, and so am I. It's true: that's the basic subject. I know we are called Teutonic and destructive, but now you know the truth.

M2: "Love"—who can define that?

BB: I can. A functional definition of love is that feeling shared by two true lovers in their kiss. Our single, "The Interimlovers/ Die Interimsliebenden," which is also the first track on *Tabula Rasa,* is a description of this kiss, and is thus a critical, dynamic definition of love.

M2: Oh... OK! M2


moby
move
ON ELEKTRA COMPACT DISCS, RECORDS AND CASSETTES
5 SONG EP ON CASSETTE AND COMPACT DISC.
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doom
PATROL
Serial
CHARACTER

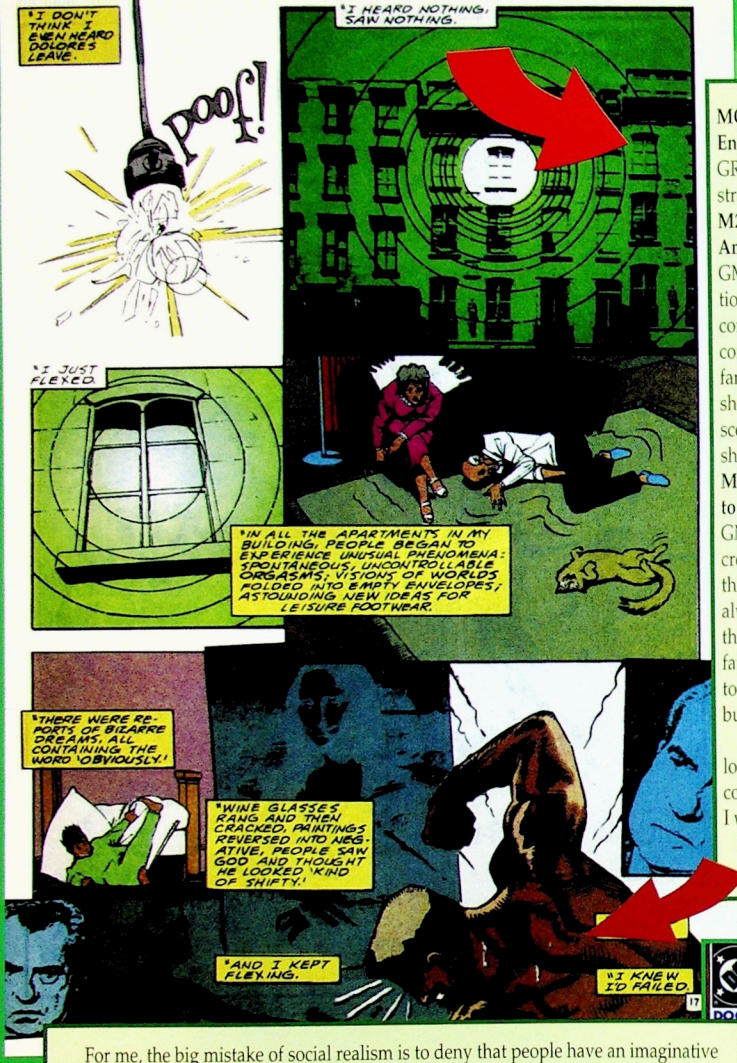
the candlemaker's privilege Grant plays Morrison god

by Paul McEnery

Grant Morrison has been called the Glaswegian André Breton of the graphic novel. Or again: Luis Bunuel directing the Marx Brothers in material out of the Fortean Times. *Whatever. He came to comic books out of theatre—*Red King Rising, *in which Alice springs full grown out of Lewis Carrolls's head and confronts him with his real urges. His first big break came during the British Invasion of DC Comics which later evolved into Karen Berger's Vertigo line. He picked up* Animal Man, *a rather crappy bit character that nobody remembered and turned it around into the most interesting deconstruction of comix ever. He courted controversy with* The New Adventures of Hitler, *hit paydirt with a Batman graphic novel,* Arkham Asylum *(with Dave McKean). Now he's slated to take over* Swamp Thing *(with Mark Millar) and will be scripting issues 15-17 of* Spawn, *currently the hottest book on the market. The new book is* Sebastian O, *which is J.K. Huysmans crossed with Hannibal Lecter in virtual reality. But his real achievement to date is* Doom Patrol—*the world's first surrealist superteam, a book which cheerfully plagiarizes Borges, Terence McKenna and the Smiths.*

—Paul McEnery

Photo by Seamus Coutts. Composite by Bart Nagel. Colorizing by Heide Foley


"I DON'T THINK I EVEN HEARD DOLORES LEAVE.
poof!
"I HEARD NOTHING, SAW NOTHING.
"I JUST FLEXED.
"IN ALL THE APARTMENTS IN MY BUILDING, PEOPLE BEGAN TO EXPERIENCE UNUSUAL PHENOMENA: SPONTANEOUS, UNCONTROLLABLE ORGASMS; VISIONS OF WORLDS MOLDED INTO EMPTY ENVELOPES; ASTOUNDING NEW IDEAS FOR LEISURE FOOTWEAR.
"THERE WERE REPORTS OF BIZARRE DREAMS, ALL CONTAINING THE WORD 'OBVIOUSLY.'
"WINE GLASSES RANG AND THEN CRACKED. PAINTINGS REVERSED INTO NEGATIVE. PEOPLE SAW GOD AND THOUGHT HE LOOKED 'KIND OF SHIFTY.'
"AND I KEPT FLEXING.
"I KNEW I'D FAILED.
17

MONDO 2000: All the young turks of comics are English—I say English but I shouldn't say that...

GRANT MORRISON: No you shouldn't. I'll have to go strap on my battle kilt.

M2: ...and they seem to be uniquely infatuated with America.

GM: I think what happened was that this is a generation that grew up with American comics, and American comics of that kind were more imaginative than British comics. It's as simple as people working out childhood fantasies. I know I got to feel a thrill that I probably shouldn't have felt at all when I finally got to write a scene where the Flash presses his ring and his costume shoots out.

M2: Unlike some people out there, you seem to relate to comics like a big kid.

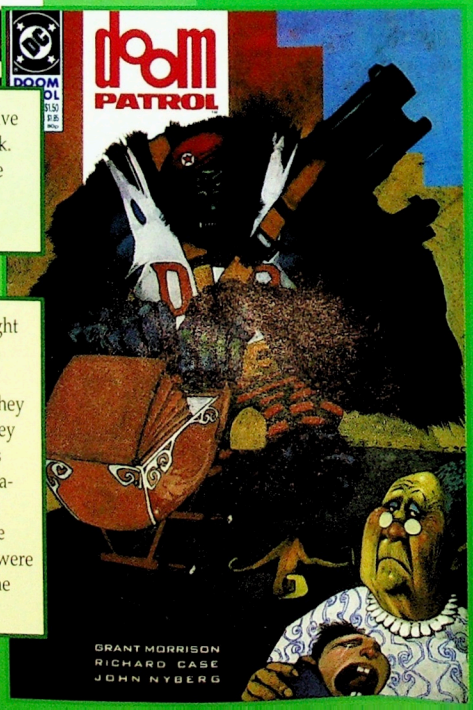
GM: Well, there was an effort a couple of years back to create of comics some kind of valid adult medium but I think that's a misguided attempt. Comics should always be a marginalized art form because that's where the interesting ideas come through. I'm glad to see the failure of all these coffee table editions that people tried to bring out as a way of legitimizing the whole comics business.

The idea that you could bring something as ridiculous as superheroes into the real world seemed to me completely insane. The logic of that didn't hold up and I was more interested in comics as what they were, as ridiculous garish combination of words and pictures about people with ludicrous talents.

For me, the big mistake of social realism is to deny that people have an imaginative life and people said that's not really realistic until you see someone pissing in the sink. But in actual fact, they eliminate a whole other area of people's lives that involves the fact that everybody's got some sort of weird ghost story in the family, or had some strange thing that's inexplicable. The artist's job is to deepen the mystery.

The things I liked when I was a kid was where Flash got turned into a paperweight on the cover saying "Please, help me," with a whole streetful of people walking past, ignoring him. To me that stuff is a lot more important. Those guys were working at speed and working to an audience that they felt was below them and by doing that they were actually getting stuff through that they wouldn't have allowed themselves if they thought they were working for adults and trying to impress someone. I liked comics that you'd pick up and there'd be screaming word balloons all over them and exhortations for you to buy it, and Superman with the head of a giant red ant on the front...

I've always felt that the best comics were the ones that appeared as adverts in the other comics, and there'd be some fantastic cover scene you could never find. They were like the Holy Grail of comics. If I could finally write a comic that existed purely in the realm of potential, then that would be my ultimate ideal.



M2: In one of your plots, the Pentagon uses fairy stories to soften up dead souls. Do you think you've traumatized many kids with *Doom Patrol*?

GM: I'd like to think I'd traumatized lots. I'm grateful to the people who scarred me as a child. I read all sorts of hideous European fairy tales when I was in school. It's all grist for the mill later on. A lot of the fears you have as an adult are rooted in things you read when you were a child and you root it up and expose it and use it. Turn it to advantage.

M2: Your villain is usually the omnipotent bad father.

GM: Well no, because I get on really well with my dad. He was a radical activist, and someone I really admire. The whole bad father thing was in the head of Crazy Jane because she bound the series together. She appeared in the first one I wrote and disappeared in the last one. A lot of the stuff could be seen as her delusions. I always had that in the back of my mind.

M2: She's like the 64 Faces of Eve, with a different power for every personality. Why the big interest?

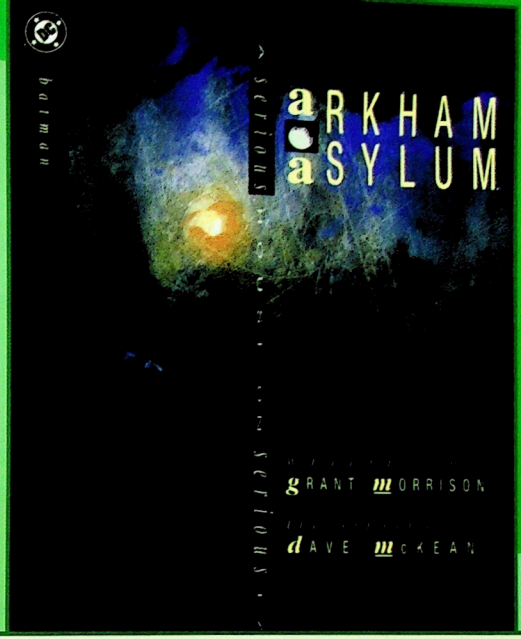
GM: I have this deep down belief that personality's a fiction, and basically everyone has multiple personality disorder. Basically we let some people take over in situations where they shouldn't; sometimes you try to be suave and sophisticated and you turn into a stumbling seventeen year old. Where did that guy come from? I really do think there's quite a strong fragmentation in most people's personalities.

That was the whole thing with Crazy Jane at the end of *Doom Patrol*, she learned to let them take charge where it was appropriate for each one to take charge rather than the other way round. I think that's true of most people, except most of us don't call it a disorder. My character's a bit more flexible in that way. The whole disorder thing has just arisen because of Oprah Winfrey, basically. It's all her doing.

When I was doing *Doom Patrol*, we used to get multiple personality newsletters sent in, and it was always great stuff, like people would have a problem page in it, and it would be answered by the same person but in three different personalities. I always had this dream that multiple personalities would buy *Doom Patrol*, and each of the personalities would buy a copy, get the sales up.

M2: Your methods are pretty fractured as well. You're known for using cut-ups and plagiarism, for example.

GM: I just can't read fiction because I know the tricks and I can see the machinery and by page 15, I know what's going to happen on the last page. It doesn't deliver what I'm looking for, which is a more all-encompassing view. It's like Burroughs says, when you walk down the street, the information that comes at you is so scattershot, you hear a strident conversation, you see a stop sign flash, you get certain images in the corner of your eye... that's the way we experience things and art still isn't quite up to the task of getting that across.



I like to think of the stuff that I do as disposable as well, because it's of the moment and expressing something then. There's always that egomaniac in you that wants to be remembered in 300 years time but that's so unlikely that what I'd rather do now is get sense impressions out and try to connect with people.

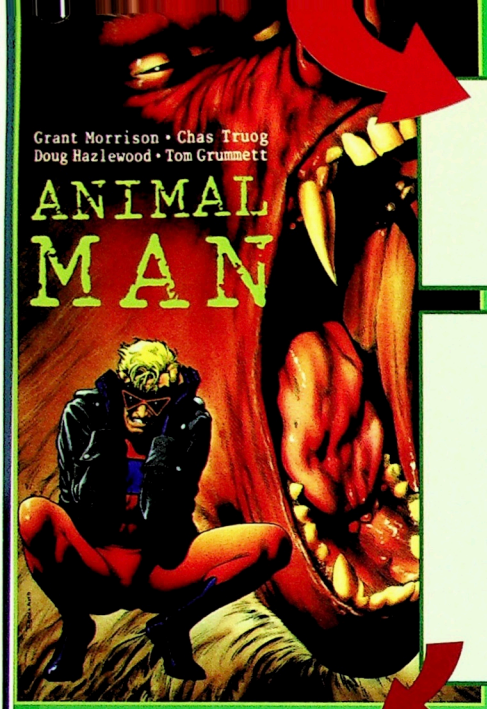
M2: One of the avenues of plagiarism is that it grabs the big ideas and shrinks them into four-color pictures.

GM: Well that's democratic, because everyone can plagiarize, and by doing so, it's like the Borges story of Pièrre Menard. His version of *Don Quixote* is revealed by Borges to be completely different from the original because it's by a man whose background is different—he lives in the twentieth century as opposed to the 17th century. The text takes on a whole other meaning when passed through a plagiarist.

Perception is a cut-up

I detest stories and 19th century story structure. These are really strong in comics and basically if you try to do anything else you're condemned as pretentious, and while I may be pretentious I'm still not interested in linear stories. To me the idea of comics is like sitting in front of your TV with a channel changer. To me MTV is much more successful than any of the postmodernists in getting across the idea that perception is a cut-up.

Page excerpt from Doom Patrol #35



M2: Do you ever have any desire to work in any other media, like film?
GM: Right now I'm working on a treatment for Ridley Scott, but that may come to nothing. Film treatments come and vanish into the ether. He's made a pile of money from this *Blade Runner: the Director's Cut*, and he wanted to do Dan Dare. He liked the material I'd done with Rian Hughes because it was slightly more the darker edge and it was a bit more ironic, so I've written a treatment for him. If he likes it, it proceeds from there; if he doesn't then that's the end of it.

M2: You've got a bad attitude towards science, but you go on a bit about new science, like nanotechnology, catastrophe theory and all that.
GM: It's only because I don't understand science. When I got to twelve I made a conscious decision to be arty rather than scientific. Interestingly, I used to fairly good at mathematics and physics, and then I became hopelessly inept at them overnight. I don't understand science, but I'm interested in it in a poetic fashion. It's not hard science, it's science used as metaphor.

The same in *Sebastian O*—virtual reality's in it, but it's more important to me that VR is an extension of the whole decadent creed of the Artificial—a world free from nature, which is impossible, of course. That's why I combined those two things, Victorian Decadence and the computer thing. I was interested in that as a symbol, rather than as science, because the virtual reality in *Sebastian O* simply will not be possible for a hundred years from now.

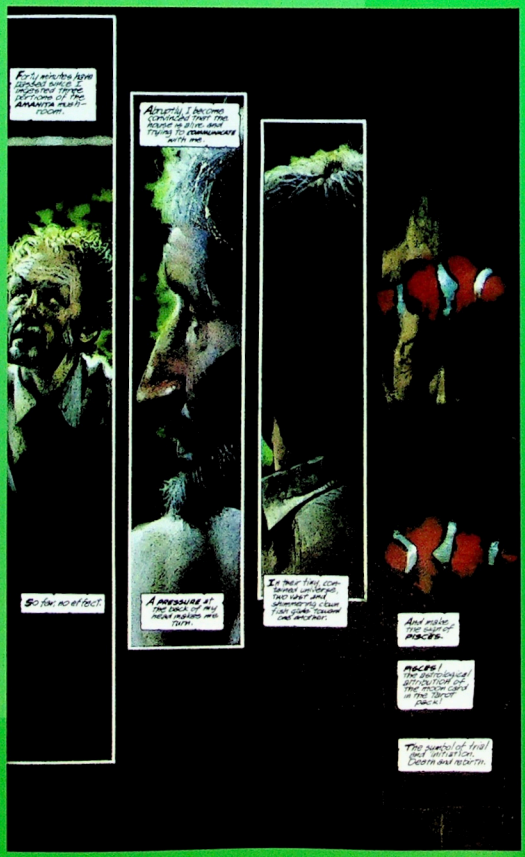
They're all living in a generated world; Lord Theo controls everything. Basically, he's God, and Sebastian shoots him, and he's quite happy to be living in an artificial world because it fulfills his aesthetic creed. It's the ultimate decadent idea to live in a world which is completely without nature.

M2: There's unusual for you—to kill God inside of three issues. It took you six in *Doom Patrol*.
GM: Well, I've still got to kill him again.

M2: You're a soft-spoken man, but you blow up universes for a living.
GM: Peter Barnes once said, "Trust the song and not the singer," and that's how I feel. I lead a fairly quiet, inoffensive, monkish life, but secretly I want to destroy the universe and everything in it, so that stuff comes out in the work. The fact of having grown up in the time of punk throws a nihilistic thing in there—smash it up, soon-to-be-picturesque ruins, all that stuff. My characters are just doing what I find impossible to do in my real life. It's a pathetic wish-fulfillment fantasy ultimately.

M2: The Candlemaker: "All these things, did I make them? They're not real, and now I'm going to destroy them." That's your writing style.
GM: So horribly true. I had this whole fox thing when I was a kid. I believed there was a secret underground kingdom of benevolent foxes who were running around and I would signal to them in the hills; and one time when I was really arsed I started to hallucinate, and all I hallucinated was foxes, so I decided to adopt that as a totem. I was even more interested when I found the Dogon tribe have their Satan figure, this character called Ogo who was also known as the pale fox. Ogo created the earth, this thing that was soiled and imperfect and that's why God didn't like him, so I totally identified with Ogo and wanted to be his avatar on earth.

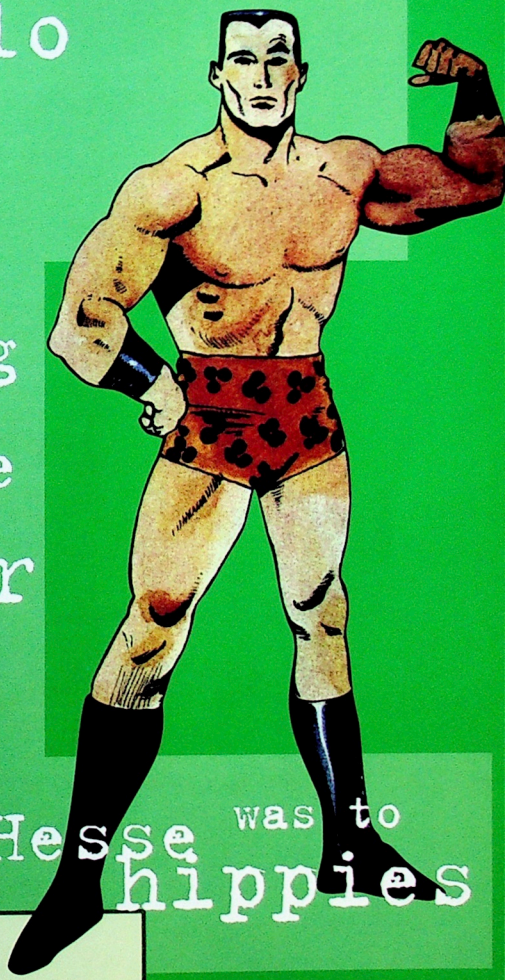
M2: Is that the way you see yourself as a writer—the satanic demiurge?


So far, no effect.
A pressure at the back of my head makes me turn.
And inside, the sun of PISCES.
PISCES! The astrological attribution of the moon card in the Tarot pack!
The symbol of final and initiation. Death and rebirth.

GM: I'm always on the side of Satan, because he's the one who introduced us to the concept of knowledge. When I was a kid I kind of figured out this whole thing where the serpent is the symbol of life and rebirth and DNA, so I decided since then that if I was on anyone's side I'd be on Satan's side, which is not to say I want to join Anton La Vey's church. I see Satan and Christ as the same thing which is the creative principle and the principle towards evolution.

To me, the way I look at it currently, the superhero is a debased manifestation of the desperate need for some feeling of movement towards evolution. That's what they represent. Whether it's bad or good is something I want to examine and really delve into. That's one of the things that made the old comics more interesting, the whole concept of kryptonite which destroys God. We create Superman and almost immediately we have to create something which destroys Superman. Looking at that stuff in a different light is what I became interested in dealing with.

Flex Mentallo is going to be for slackers what Hesse was to hippies



I've got a *Flex Mentallo* series coming out from DC, which I want to be the first superhero comic for the 21st century. It's going to be for slackers what Sartre was to existentialists and Hesse was to hippies. I've put a lot of work into it. It's four issues and it says about everything that I want to say about superheroes and how they can be used. I deal with Superman being a sort of male figure, and what I thought was great in the 60's was they invented red kryptonite which made Superman fluid and female. There was this whole transformation throughout the sixties when all the male heroes were feminized—this whole concept of transformations and weird vibrations and turning into ants or women. You know, Jimmy Olsen's forever dressing up in women's clothes. That to me is important in the development of comics, the idea of diffusing the hard body.

M2: That sounds like Michel Foucault.

GM: God help me. What I'm interested in digging into is why that should be popular, and why the whole idea of the feminized superhero has disappeared again, and what they were really saying in those things. These days it's the whole revenge vigilante thing that's really popular.

One of the things I like to do is to invest objects with power because I think it's the viewpoint you have as a child or when you're on drugs—things become immensely significant and that kind of gets rid of the need for art. I suppose for me the best art is the stuff that reminds you how to look at the world, like Duchamp's urinal—now each time you look at a urinal you see it as being a significant object. That's what I've tried to do, to take these ordinary objects and say this stuff's quite interesting depending on how you look at it.

The whole kind of Danny the World thing at the end of the *Doom Patrol* is to say the world we're living in is actually Wonderland and Oz, but it just depends on how you look at it, and to try to get people to look at it in that way.

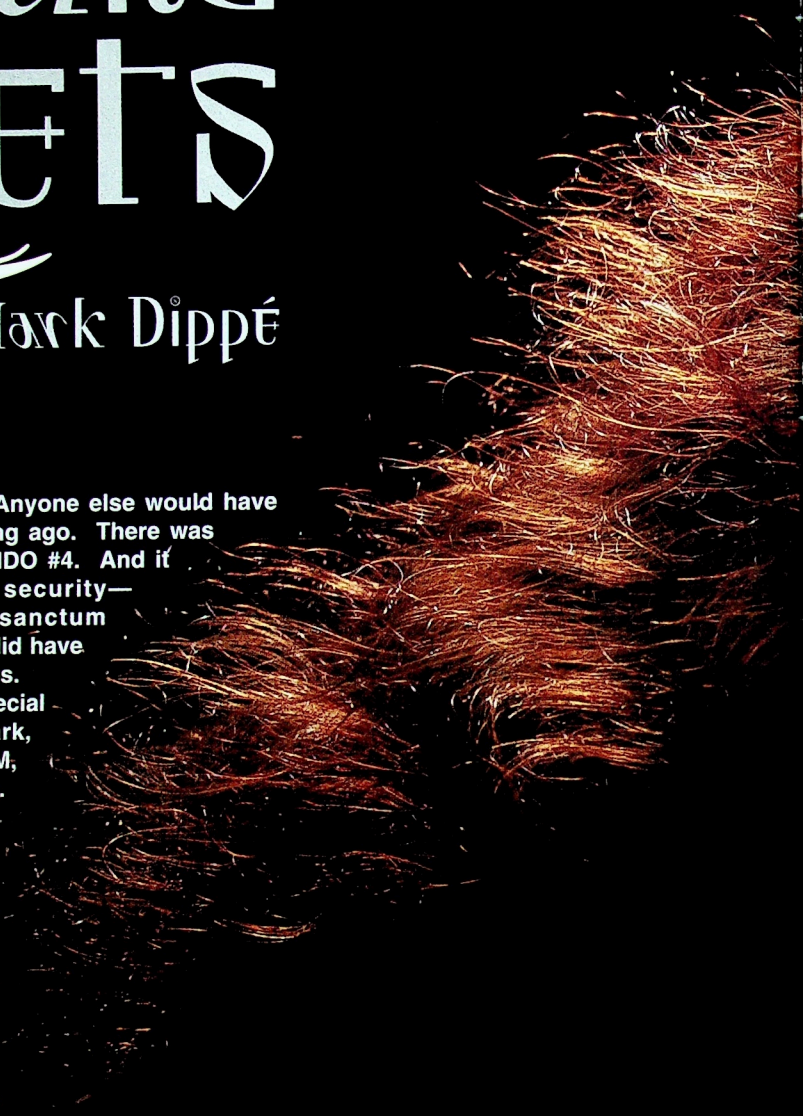
M2: Sort of a *sous les pavés, la plage* sort of thing. There's pretension for you!

GM: [*Nervous laugh*] M2

Thanks to Ross for the use of his back room at "Beyond the Pale", Sacramento's leading edgy-comics haunt.

New Guild Secrets

as revealed by Mark Dippé



How does he get away with it? Anyone else would have gotten pitched out of Valhalla long ago. There was that scandalous pull quote in MONDO #4. And it didn't help that he violated security—repeatedly—in George Lucas' sanctum sanctorum either... OK, so maybe he did have to tread easy around ILM for a few months.

So when the enfant terrible of the special effects world (Terminator 2, Jurassic Park, and Rising Sun) orchestrates a party for ILM, you know it'll be polymorphous perverse. But, however did he line up the Richard Nixon Presidential Museum and fucking birthplace for the event?

Abetted by Clint Goldman, he envisioned an "Evening of Social Penetration" to be called "NAILED." The edited version was only slightly less extreme. But you hadda've been there. Tim Leary doing his Yo! schtick with his Big Screen image mirrored in the reflecting pool; pierced psychedelic shamans in Pat's Goodwill Gallery; group ego-aerobics quick cut to stern-lipped museum officials. Mark promised an "evening of techno-ritual to fill that hole in your head." For a brief shimmering moment, consensus reality stood on its head. Orange County officials now decline to reveal the exact cost to taxpayers for the special swarm team sent to contain the jollities.

by Wes Thomas ⊕ Photo by Bart Nagel

MONDO 2000: It feels like a church here.

MARK DIPPÉ: This is the screening room. We create these huge spectacles here at ILM. They're like roller-coaster rides—your mouth hangs open and your throat gets dry. The movies serve this commercial purpose, but they give us the opportunity to create powerful new experiences. We've pioneered this new digital filmmaking world.

The digital revolution represents the democratization of filmmaking. Traditionally, when you make films you've got all these actors, you have all these lights, you have grips and electricians. It's a big deal. There's a quote—I believe it's Cocteau—which says, "Filmmaking will never be a true art form until it's as accessible as pencil and paper." Currently if you have a story you want to film, it requires so many people. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but it's very hierarchical.

Making a big commercial picture is like starting a factory. It lasts for like nine months or a year and employs hundreds of people, costs millions of dollars, and then you shut the factory down. But digital technology allows you to create your own world. You play God. You create your characters, you define their lives, you define their behavior, what they love, what they want, who lives, who dies. It's also sort of insidious. We are allowed to create a complete world that has the total appearance of reality.

M2: Tell me about the insidious stuff.

MD: Well, virtual reality, for instance. People talk about how wonderful and powerful it is, but while the medium itself expands possibilities, it also empowers oppressive elements. Virtual reality is the television of tomorrow. Many peoples' experiences are mediated via television and mediocritized because television programs to the lowest common denominator. VR will do the same thing. So if you're poor and unable, you'll go to Mt. Everest virtually. If you have the bucks, you'll go there for real. If you're good-looking and got the dough, you're going to have sex with beautiful women for real. If you're lonely and introverted and have no dough and a crummy apartment, you're going to have virtual sex with fake beautiful girls.

M2: Bring on the dancing girls.

MD: Exactly. But the reason why this is insidious is that you always know the truth. Virtual sex to me isn't going to be any more powerful than porn tapes. Not that there's anything wrong with them. But they're a poor substitute. In other words, if that's the only way you have of expressing or experiencing these things, it's oppressive. We'll go from couch potatoes to couches where you'll see the potatoes in the dirt, so to speak. We'll get buried even more. So these sorts of advances in the power of the medium will cause the spectrum to grow wider—from richer to poorer, more spectacular to more tragic.

Personally, I'm not against it. I just take a more synergistic view—nothing comes for free. Someone's got to pay the piper. Even with television today, you get a particular view of the war, a particular view of the earthquake, a particular view of the crime. I think VR will further expand on that, so everyone will have a very lopsided view of what's really happening.

M2: *Rising Sun* raises interesting questions on the insidious manipulation of reality, doesn't it?

MD: It's insidious when you lose the ability to separate real from fake. One of the central elements in *Rising Sun* is a surveillance disc that documents this terrible crime. The disc is delivered as evidence. But someone has doctored it so well, no one can tell. That's one of the themes. What's real and what isn't? How do you determine? When the process is so clean, there's no way to know. There are no fingerprints.

Thematically *Rising Sun* is about what we were talking about earlier. And that is: with digital technology, how do you know if an image is real or fabricated? Oftentimes, photographs are produced as evidence in trials and hearings. Photographs are used to teach and to document things. In other words, the photograph is used as a means of communicating truth. But today, the power of manipulating photographs is beyond belief. The classic story is *National Geographic*. *National Geographic* isn't a magazine people would question. When there's a story in there, you don't think they're bullshitting. They might be somewhat biased, but they wouldn't be lying, like doctoring a photograph. But there was an example on their cover in which two pyramids were too far apart to fit the frame so they moved them closer together. They thought it was OK, given the existing level of manipulation in the media. Then you have people who are more malicious about it. Like Russian history books where they erased people at certain times and put them back. I've seen photographs like that where you see fuzzy parts of the image. Just think if you never knew. If for some reason you had the power to have control over the original source material and you altered all the versions, it could have an amazing effect.

Rising Sun deals with that idea in the form of surveillance camera footage used to help solve a crime. So we shot film that shows a crime in progress and transferred it to video and manipulated it with the Harry. We did some work here at ILM. Then we put that film back onto video and played it back on a set and then shot it with a camera again. The interesting thing about *Rising Sun* is that we really did what the story was talking about. We actually shot the murderer for real and took him out and put somebody else's head in. We actually shot a scene where you see something going on and we put a shadow over the guy so you couldn't see him any longer. We weren't trying to be show-offs, it just made the whole process more real.

M2: Can you describe the scene?

MD: There's this gorgeous blond model who's employed for the enjoyment of these powerful Japanese businessmen. Now, one evening, there's a big party. The Japanese are opening this huge building, and the undercurrent is that they want to buy the last major semiconductor facility in America. This girl is murdered and there's a videotape showing who murdered her. Now it looks like she's into rough sex—kinky stuff, erotic asphyxiation. So there's a scene where she's being choked and you think it's rape but then it comes out that she likes that kind of thing. So there's a moment in the tape that shows the face of the murderer. But it's this other guy—a well-known playboy, son of a very powerful man in Japan, whose company is a rival of the men giving the party. Now the cops get the surveillance tapes. And they bring in Sean Connery, who knows the way of the Japanese and understands all the unspoken communication of their language. He senses that there's something missing in the whole thing. He decides to take the videotapes to a laboratory. He notices that there's something funny about them.

So they go to the USC Imaging Lab, and there's a young woman there who knows *everything* about digital imagery. She begins playing the tapes, and says, "These aren't the original tapes. There's a wind-up signature." They begin to examine the frames very closely

and she says "Look at this. Everybody's casting a shadow over here, but this one's casting a shadow over there." We really did what she's talking about—changed the shadows, removed a person from the frame, etc. So they look further and she says, "Hey, there's some weird thing here. It looks like a human body. A little bit of a shadow that's been removed." Someone was there who's now missing. And then they notice that there's lots of glass everywhere. So they look for some reflections of the missing person that were left in by mistake. They begin searching through the frame, investigating—you then get the idea that digital manipulation is based on the acuity of the person doing the work. If they don't think to remove all shadows and reflections, they might miss one. Maybe there's a shiny mirror in the background that caught the person. And even though it's very faint, if you were able to pull it out by changing contrast and color, you might be able to get the image. So she goes through the process that we actually did. You can do things like this. For example, if you find lots of reflections that are too weak, you add them all together and build up a composite image out of the pieces of reflection.

M2: These are real investigative techniques, aren't they?

MD: They're becoming that way. It's relatively new. The crime in *Rising Sun* has not yet happened, as far as we know. It may have happened and they got away with it, but it's not a common thing.

M2: Maybe it will give somebody the idea.

MD: Right now, the criminals would just steal the surveillance tapes and destroy them. I know it will happen in the future, but it's just now approaching that level of criminal manipulation.

M2: It's probably already there in the Artificial Reality Labs at the CIA.

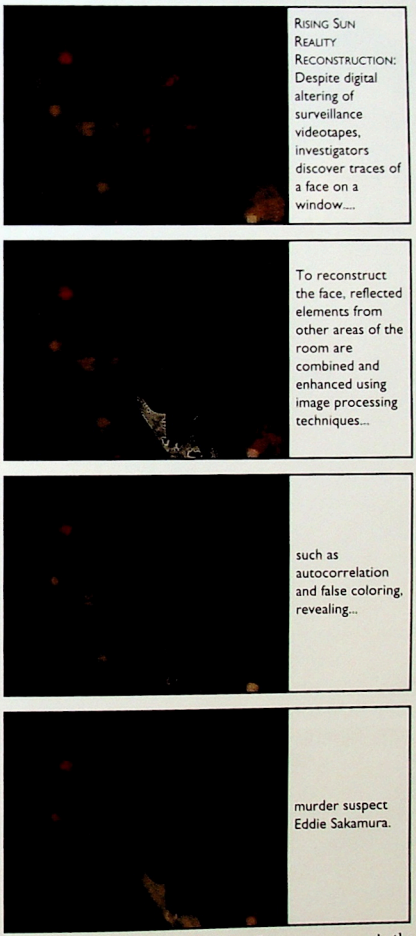
MD: No doubt about it.

M2: So what is the potential for misuse of these techniques by a surreptitious government, like *1984*??

MD: The actual potential is no greater than the potential of current techniques. The manipulation of history by modifying photographs is well-known. I have a really good book of questionable photographs. There's even a famous example from the Spanish Civil War where the guy looks like he got shot. We've all seen it. Apparently, it was a staged photograph. The guy was just falling down. So the potential is no greater, it's just that as we become more sophisticated, the ability to subvert and counterfeit becomes equally sophisticated.

M2: Could you help MONDO subvert some shots?

MD: Oh, I'd love to. See, the kind of thing we do, which is unbeknownst to most people, is we put in very strange reflections and shadows. If you look very carefully, sometimes you'll notice. But it's all subliminal.



RISING SUN REALITY RECONSTRUCTION: Despite digital altering of surveillance videotapes, investigators discover traces of a face on a window....

To reconstruct the face, reflected elements from other areas of the room are combined and enhanced using image processing techniques...

such as autocorrelation and false coloring, revealing...

murder suspect Eddie Sakamura.

I'm trying to get a project started in which we'll do a complete clinical cyber environment—this futuristic urbanized sprawl where the whole spectrum grows wider and wider. You know, the whole *Blade Runner* aesthetic, where buildings are built on top of buildings. The ability to modify yourself. Transsexualism taken to its farthest extreme...

M2: Transmorphing, as it's called.

MD: As the technology expands in all dimensions—not just digital media, but physical media, biological realities—I want to use this aesthetic to create films of that nature. I think that's the real meat of the matter. The digital approach is a natural for creating these bizarre transforming elements.

M2: Give me a description of how to create alternate realities.

MD: We're trying to tell a story, create a dramatic event that draws people in. So we shoot as much of it as possible using people, locations, set pieces, make-up, etc. Even if all the elements aren't correct, we shoot everything we can. That's your reality element. We take that film and scan it into the computer. Then we remove the elements from the film that we don't want. Maybe we move telephone poles, we remove wires and cables. Then the next step is adding what's missing. In order to do that, we have to model the location. So for example, let's pretend you're in a kitchen, like in *Jurassic Park* with the raptors. There's a lot of shiny kitchen cabinets, there's lots of pots and pans, and all kinds of junk. We have to build that set in the computer. We built the kitchen walls, the kitchen windows, those table-tops, those individual pots that are falling on the ground. We make the materials in our simulated worlds match those in the real world. So if your countertops are shiny aluminum chrome, so are ours in the computer. Just like a camera in the real world that moves on a dolly, our computer camera moves the same way.

So now we have these dual worlds. Then we have our digital actor. In this case, it's a dinosaur. Now, even though it's a creature, there's still an actor or performer behind that creature. In this case, it's the animator. The digital actor is the person who's creating the performance of the animal behind the screen—our computer animator. So I'll direct that person's actions and they'll take their cues and motivation from the set pieces. In other words, they see where the tables are, they have to avoid them. They see where their target is and they try to get that person who's hiding behind the cabinet. They also have the live action film which shows the placement of all

Photos Provided Courtesy of Industrial Light & Magic © 1995 Universal Studios / Amblin Productions

the rest of reality. So we now have this world which incorporates our reality, we have a digital actor acting in that world, we have our digital camera photographing our digital actor. We then render all of that, because our set has all the lights in the right places and all the right colors and brightness and widths, so our digital actor will now cast shadows on the digital set. Pieces of the digital set will cast shadows on him. His colors will reflected in the chrome of our digital set. We take all of these layers of interaction created by our digital actors, in other words, we take the rendered image of the dinosaur, we take his reflections and his shadows, all out of the digital world, and lay them over the real world picture. Then we film that out, and *voilà!* we have the marriage of those two worlds.

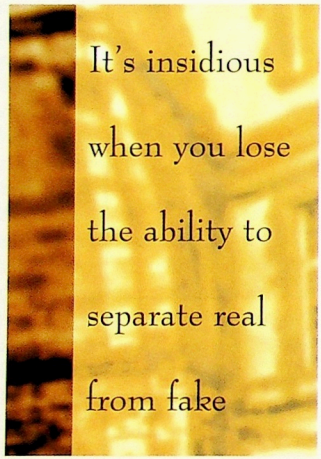
One of the tricks of the trade is whenever you shoot a scene that's going to have a digital character, you make sure the character kicks up dust, knocks over a trash can, makes the kitchen drapes get caught up in the wind... something that indicates its presence. That's the basic process.

The secondary process is adding the little touches that make all the difference. For example, you have a huge dinosaur running in the rain. Now the ground isn't being crunched by his feet. The pebbles aren't being kicked up. He's not splashing the water when he runs through puddles. You can't create all those fake effects practically. To stage all that—little explosive effects to pull the ground down—would be amazingly expensive and too difficult. With digital photography, there's no pebbles, no hole, no splashes. So we have to add all those details as secondary layers.

There's so much detail. If we were to sit down and look at a shot and you tried to pick out what was real and what wasn't, it would be very tough. It's tough for me. A lot of times *I* have to remember what we did. To me, *Jurassic* broke so many boundaries. We just said, "There are no rules." We'd think of a great shot, and even if we didn't know how the hell we're going to finish it, we'd just figure it out.

M2: Earlier, you spoke of digital filmmaking as the democratization of film. Are we going to start seeing amazing homebrew productions done by guerrilla artists?

MD: Yeah, digital garage bands. Digital technology opens the field for people to create their own films and digital effects. Currently you can buy some Macintoshes, or even an SGI, if you have that much money. You can get things like PhotoShop to do two-dimensional work. You can buy a lot of very inexpensive, simple 3D modeling progams. You are now able to create photorealistic images that allow you to design these realistic, or surrealistic worlds. Anyone can get access to the technology and anyone can do it. What's happening right now is you're seeing a lot of these small garage shops which are getting involved in television and film by way of digital effects. As the technology becomes less costly, people will start creating entire animated shorts. It's not really happening yet, but it will expand to animated shorts, and it won't be long before people will be using this sort of technology for features.



Film is expensive, but videotape is cheap. Anyone can go out and shoot a two-hour video. Again, it's just getting the production values and sophistication of a fantastic location. You can't afford to fly to Costa Rica. Well, then you do what we did with the *Young Indiana Jones*. You go and you shoot someone in front of a palm tree down on Market Street and you alter the rest of the frame to have waterfalls and big colorful birds. Soon you'll be able to create the production values and the theatricality of a big commercial production with these digital techniques.

M2: How long before the stuff you're doing now will be available on a Macintosh or SGI?

MD: It's happening now. You can do digital matte paintings like in the *Young Indiana Jones* series with PhotoShop and a Mac—that's how *we* do it. But it still has to trickle down in terms of people getting the experience and knowledge. And then the process itself is a rather painstaking one. Anyone can take pictures with a camera, but only certain people have the kind of sympathy for the process to go out and do a lot of photography.

M2: But is the software here? Are the tools all available to do the more sophisticated things you were talking about?

MD: We try to use off-the-shelf stuff as much as possible. Some of the things we do use custom software constructed by our guys.

M2: So there are a lot of tricks one could do?

MD: There are. Some of our tricks are still not well-established but the medium itself is evolving so rapidly, I would say two years...

M2: In two years people at home will be able to do everything you're doing here?

MD: Very close.

M2: We hope to see some amazing things coming out of your studios.

MD: I hope so. Not only amazing visually, but the stories as well. Films like *Jurassic Park*, while they're lots of fun, it's basically, "Oh, look at those beautiful dinosaurs." I'd like to talk about issues that are more compelling, like if you are biologically manufactured, are you of a lower quality than someone who is naturally created? When the mass media becomes so powerful and people become VR televangelists... people talk about this a lot. Just think about Billy Graham multiplied a millionfold, he'll be simultaneously translated into every language in the world. His speeches will be custom manipulated to be appealing to each individual. You'll be able to create this metamorphosing God figure for everyone.

So what's going to happen? If you bring a person into a simulated space that's real, you can have them believe in miracles. Like Popov. Popov was the "healer" who was revealed as a fraud here in San Francisco. He had an FM transmitter in his ear and a bunch of assistants who talked to people in the crowd. His wife stood in the back and gave him cues in the hidden receiver. He would walk up to them, and say: "I hear a voice crying. It's Sarah. She's come up all the way from Modesto. And she has a terrible pain." Meanwhile, his wife's transmitting: "The woman in the white, second from the left in the front row..." Someone with a scanner caught all this while filming the event. The amazing part was, some of the people were actually "healed." This filmmaker went up to them and showed them the film. And the people said, "Well, maybe he's not doing it the right way. But he sure helped me. And I thank God for him." So the point is that when

Insidious fakery: Bart Nagel

the experience is so powerful, it's like suspended disbelief. All of a sudden you no longer need to question why, the experience is so powerful that that's all that matters.

The idea of digital manipulation for VR politicians is amazing too. You can deliver a different version to every home, based on their tastes and needs. It's like the home shopping network for the future. By recording what you watch and what you buy they'll deliver a perfect representation of your favorite president.

M2: And based on your fantasies.

MD: It's definitely going to happen. People talk about custom programming. 500 channels. You'll be able to make your own TV show. The real truth of the matter is it's still passive. They're going to analyze what you watch and make more of it for you. It's just more mediocrity.

M2: Self-reinforcing your prejudices.

MD: Yeah, when you think about 500 channels, it's getting closer and closer to that little electrode in your brain, where you press that pleasure button again and again like those lab monkeys that starved themselves to death. It gets to the point where they've zeroed in on that little part of your brain that keeps you going. What we should really do with MONDO, the way it could make a lot of money, would be to have our own pleasure center kit. We'll get a real nice needle and instructions on how and where to insert, hook it up to a very safe little stimulating system, and we can have everyone stay in their homes and starve to death. But have a great time doing it.

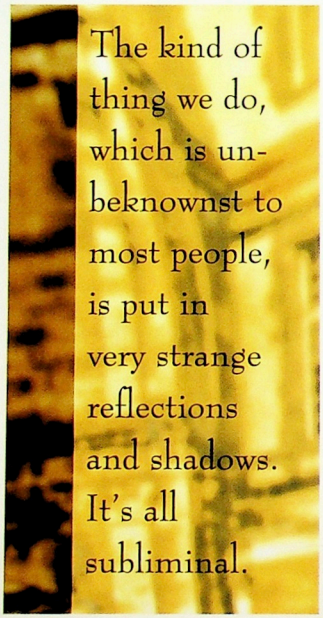
M2: A great way to reduce.

MD: The diet plan that would work for anyone. Digital technology does have this nefarious side, because if you're a clever individual, you will find a way to achieve your goal. And the ethical boundaries are all over the map. You're going to find a clever individual whose goals don't jibe with yours, and they're going to find a way to achieve them.

M2: Some people believe the Apollo moon landings were simulated in the Nevada desert. Maybe we should go back and analyze those TV tapes.

MD: There's a tremendous amount of manipulation, though I think people fuck up all the time. A lot of these manipulative groups or agencies make mistakes. Nobody covers their tracks. Just like in *Rising Sun*. They're a very sophisticated group, and they left just enough for some other clever person to figure out what was going on. That's the whole idea behind hacking and phreaking. There's always a way to get in, and if you're determined and you've got the chops, you can find your way in.

Digital technology allows a lot of latitude. If you want to get your message across, you can create a powerful image that communicates it, and yet which has all the characteristics of reality. Let's say you want people to reject certain ideas or certain people, you can re-arrange them so they have more distasteful angles. Think of Nixon. When he was first on television, he was sort of unkempt, so he had this distasteful look. Digitally speaking you can modify all of that. You can make people look eternally young. Take Arnold Schwarzenegger. We can make a complete digital replica, and he would never lose that perfect body tone, that great simian brow. If we spent enough time, we could capture him in the present, we could keep his youthful gladiator look forever.


The kind of thing we do, which is un-beknownst to most people, is put in very strange reflections and shadows. It's all subliminal.

M2: Once it becomes convincing enough to be used on ordinary television, the real world will pale into insignificance. It will be so depressing that people will not be able to accept anything other than the synthetic world.

MD: What is beauty? It's totally artificial. Hardly anybody looks like those people in the magazines. And yet that ideal appears so often that it seems common. You don't see many fat Japanese people on prime time television. You see a lot of young, active, pretty people. In the VR world, it's going to be an even stronger element, because then you can be in that world and sit down with them and perceive them from your point of view. And yet they're still going to be beautiful, young, athletic, successful and outgoing and bright. The disparity between your own reality and the mediated reality is going to be even greater.

M2: When are we going to see more media manipulation coming from the counter-culture?

MD: Well, it's a question of support and opportunity. We have enormous support here at ILM in terms of equipment and technology. And we're given the opportunity. On a project like *Jurassic*, someone is giving us a lot of time and money to create a new image. So it goes hand in hand. You may have the idea and the talent, but if you're not given the opportunity, it's not going to come to life. If I were to sit at home with a Macintosh, I could make some wild images. Now people can do what EBN is doing at home. Not just cut-up video MTV-style, getting a direct message across. Digital tools just give us more freedom to hack reality.

M2: They also give more freedom to the media manipulators.

MD: The sad truth is that individuals will always be under-equipped. We're always going to have smaller engines. The CIA or whoever is always going to have the bigger infrastructure.

M2: Or your metaphor of extending the range. The range extends in time, as well. They'll be three years ahead of the microprocessor cycle. They'll have the parallel processors and the virtual world-generator chip running in background mode behind the media which is automatically doing the reality adjustment.

MD: There's a lot of us thinking creatively about this stuff who have the same kind of subversive agendas they do. So it's just a question of having the energy and discipline to get there before it's taken away from us, before they have a handle on it. It's like the new fiber cable. They want to make sure when they install the new telephone lines that they can be tapped properly. If encryption becomes widespread, tapping becomes a moot point. Hacking is moving as rapidly as commerce. Maybe not as rapidly as the government, but

as fast as the rate of commercial devlopment.

M2: The Internet is emerging as the new media, with digital audio and digital video. You can now have video routed to Peking or any place. It's very subversive. I see people hacking the datastream and manipulating that stuff in realtime.

MD: Definitely. But let's pretend you're going to give a broadcast, a live perfomance. It doesn't have to be as insidious as the government trying to control people. Let's pretend it's just someone trying to sell you a record. Then you have Michael Jackson—he's changing his skin color, he's changing everything. Well, he'll make sure that his performance is manipulated for every different venue—for different countries, for different ages, different times of day. The whole objective is to sell more records. It's still a manipulative process, but not such an evil one beyond the greed factor.

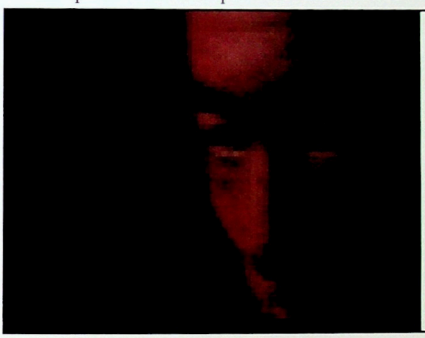
M2: Tell me more about the art of transmorphing in video.

MD: Well, like with Schwarzenegger nowadays, you as a performer will create a digital manifestation of yourself that is totally manipulable. You can be muscular, you can be young forever, you can be white, you can be black, you can be tan. And all of those things will be changeable in an instant. You can be tanned on a sunny beach while you're actually at home in Paris, and you're phoning in your performance. You attach yourself to your digital character that's performing on television and be wherever you want to be. You can be an aged tired old star, but they're still going to keep your voice strong and your muscles big. But a star, even an individual, is going to want to have a history—they grew up, they went to school, they had romances, they had broken hearts, they had failures. So there will be this whole false history of stars which looks so real that the viewers will accompany this character through their "lives."

The obvious idea that's kicked around is you'll create a digital Mickey Mouse. And the difference will be that he's a real thing. He's a character that goes across national boundaries. The Mickey Mouse of tomorrow will speak every single language, he will be a symbol for children in the entire universe. But like the Mickey Mouse of today, he doesn't age. He's an anthropomorphized caricature. But I think we'll also be able to create characters that actually have a lifetime—maybe longer than normal—but they actually will be children who grow up and go through life. We'll have loads of digital performers who actually do the work to make their lives happen, so to speak.

M2: So the simulacra market will become dominant and people's real lives will merge into the background and become accessories to the simulacra. *Total Recall.*

MD: I see that happening when cyberspace becomes real. When we actively engage in this simulated space in commerce and work, when we have to *enter* it rather than just seeing it on the screen, then the representation of that space will become a part of our life. It will be very powerful in terms of entertainment or politics because of control and money. In other words, if you create a character that doesn't age, like Mickey Mouse, then that's a franchise. You can make movie #1, movie #2, movie #3, and they never ask for a raise. That actor will work all day long and never get tired. You can throw them off a building and blow them up 100 times. All these elements of physical limitation and manageability disappear because you own that character. And all you have to do is hire the performer who no one sees to do the "work," and that creature can appear on TV stations around the world, around the clock, indefinitely.



DIGITAL FRAME-UP: Sloppy retouching of the blue edge from the underlying image betrays that Eddie's face has been digitally pasted over the senator's face.

M2: You can Waldoize them remotely.

MD: Exactly. The performers are in effect Waldoized performers.

M2: And you'll have canned Waldo routines that you'll call up interactively and merge with your own performance.

MD: Let's pretend you're doing live broadcast 24 hours a day as the most popular character in the world. You might have a hundred performers of different body types and from different cultures that all have different takes on it. And you have a director who's mixing them all for a worldwide broadcast that's being simultaneously translated into five thousand languages. You can imagine this huge production center involving thousands of people distilling this character into a million permutations all at once. That's where the real power comes in.

M2: This will all be customized for each recipient.

MD: Right.

M2: With automatic realtime feedback, so that the actual performance will be a function of how people react and what's happening in the world. Now the interesting thing is when what's happening in the "real world"—if there is one—becomes interactive. If reality becomes interactive, what happens?

MD: Well, the question is: What is interactive? I think interactive means creating something out of our own minds. So far "interactivity" means commerce—watching what you buy and making more of it so you'll buy more.

M2: There are, conceivably, people who manipulate the stock market by computer modeling of the economy, ecology, and financial markets, even creating wars to cause certain stock market events...

MD: But that requires a great deal of sophistication. You see, natural forces are so great. It's like if someone hits the brakes on the freeway, the effects percolate fifteen miles down the freeway. But can you really control it?

M2: Yes, because if you can create a war at the right time, you can really disrupt. It swamps the system.

MD: But again, nature is so amazingly complex. Like the whole idea of catastrophe theory of chaos where once you change things tremendously or raise the temperatures so high, you never know what's going to happen when it cools down again. You just can't know.

M2: But if you know what the attractors are, you can say, "OK, we're going to get to that attractor by doing this."

MD: I'd love to be able to do that! That's the key, if you can understand and manage chaos catastrophe and create these spectacular events of disruption, you could positively metamorphose the world in very short amounts of time.

M2: Sounds like a plan to me. M2

Photo Provided Courtesy of Industrial Light & Magic © 1993 Universal Studios / Amblin Productions

Last Exit to VRcadia

Lurking in the hallways of VR conferences, the new buzzword is ***"location-based entertainment" (LBE)****. A term which might once have meant movie theaters—until video killed the cinema—has taken on other connotations. Hollywood movies are fast becoming little more than the marketing division of arcade games.*

A MICKEY MOUSE INDUSTRY

Take Tim Disney's digital theme park, **Virtual World**, where immersion is achieved through good old-fashioned suspension of disbelief. (For gene trackers out there, Disney *is* the literal grandnephew of Uncle Walt.) A short feature, starring Joan Severance, Judge Reinhold and Weird Al Yancovic, gives you Drivers Ed as it soaks you in the concept. But it doesn't stop there.

The experience begins the moment you enter the Explorer's Lounge of the **Virtual Geographic League**. A Victorian lobby cum bar in which you wait for the number of your boarding pass to be called. The conceit is that this is a sort of alternative universe London Explorers Club of the 1880's, and their early members were Lindbergh and Amelia Earhart. Virtual World promises a low fatality rate, but *caveat emptor*. "All travel involves an element of risk. Inter-dimensional travel is no exception." *Vivere non necesse est*, as they say.

A flight attendant leads your party of eight to the transportation pod bay, but before you get in, close your eyes, because they blast you with ultraviolet. No stowaway micro-organisms go with you when you go to the slave mines of the **Red Planet**. The pod doors shut and they blast you to another dimension to compete against your fellow drivers in a "raucous hovercraft" race. Raucous hovercraft? Fair enough.

Inside the pod, you're in full radio communication, the lower screen/map shows names and locations of the opposition, the upper screen shows the ramps, pillars and closing steel doors you have to negotiate. Play chicken, get your best mate blown up on the overhead girders, that sort of thing. Strictly speaking, this isn't VR, it's just simulation. But what you lose in illusion, you gain in response speed. And souvenir shopping.

by Paul McEnery

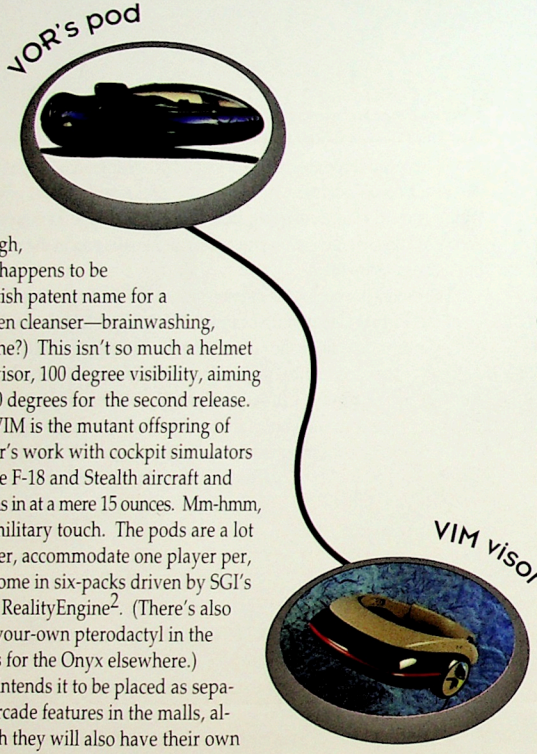
Virtual World opened its doors on July 14 just outside San Francisco, also featuring hoary old **Battletech**, which has been around in Chicago since 1990 (400,000 satisfied customers). Chicago's got a rep for recreational street shooting (or have I been watching too much telly?), so the game's survival bodes well.

Virtual World is located at 1375 N. Main Street, Walnut Creek, CA. $7-$9 for 10 minutes.

Bruce Pope

CRUISE MISSILES

Also entering the solid installation market is **Visions of Reality**. VOR has its hands on **Silicon Graphics** hardware and the new Kaiser Electro-Optics VIM (Vision Immersion Module) **Personal Viewer**. (Funnily enough, VIM happens to be a British patent name for a kitchen cleanser—brainwashing, anyone?) This isn't so much a helmet as a visor, 100 degree visibility, aiming at 180 degrees for the second release. The VIM is the mutant offspring of Kaiser's work with cockpit simulators for the F-18 and Stealth aircraft and weighs in at a mere 15 ounces. Mm-hmm, that military touch. The pods are a lot heavier, accommodate one player per, and come in six-packs driven by SGI's Onyx RealityEngine^2. (There's also a fly-your-own pterodactyl in the works for the Onyx elsewhere.) VOR intends it to be placed as separate arcade features in the malls, although they will also have their own center set up somewhere in Orange County.



Unlike Star Tours at Disneyland, say, there's no movement inside the pod itself, just in the software. My rule of thumb is, if it doesn't make you throw up, it's a lousy simulation. Lamentably, VOR has a different POV, since it's targeting kids from age 8 on up, with a "*Top Gun* in Space kind of a thing" to be their first game. Yes, really. But VOR promises that this will be the most immersive experience in the trade.

Visions of Reality, 15540 B Rockfield Blvd., Irvine, CA 92718. (800) 487-6634, (714) 587-1950. About $8 for 8-10 minutes.

In the same racket are **Alternate Worlds Technology**, with their **Reality Rocket**, which "shoots you into another reality." The first game is a one-player deal called **Wolfenstein**. Adapted from the computer game, mostly by putting you in a helmet, your POV is driving this hot lead spurting machine gun that appears bottom center of your screen around an underground bunker in search of Hitler. AWT has also created a 16-player robowarrior game called **CyberTag**. So you can all spurt hot metal death at each other if you live in the right location. This has shipped globally to arcades, from VR World in Littleton CO, to Sam Jung Corp in Seoul, Korea, to 21st Century Amusements in Clifton NJ, and so on.

Alternate Worlds Technology, 414 Baxter Avenue, Suite 230, Louisville, KY 40204. (502) 228-6266. Around $3 for 4 minutes.

AWT's pod

AWT's Hitler Screen

VEGAS IN SPACE

Also worthy of note, if not exactly virtual, is **Luxor Las Vegas**, an entertainment megastore opening in October 1993, which sets a new standard for American excess. Complete with Sphinx and its very own River Nile, it's a bloody great pyramid of a hotel/casino—you can apparently fit nine Boeing 747's inside the atrium, if you happen to have nine Boeing 747's and nothing better to do with them—with elevators running at 39 degrees up the sides. If that sounds faintly like *Blade Runner*, well, surprise, surprise... fresh from the *Back to the Future* ride at Universal Studios, Douglas Trumbull has forsaken the cinema for a new form of showmanship. A cross between theater and a roller coaster. There are *three* (count 'em)

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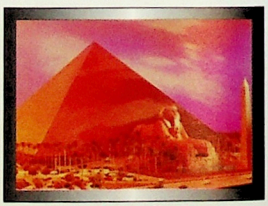
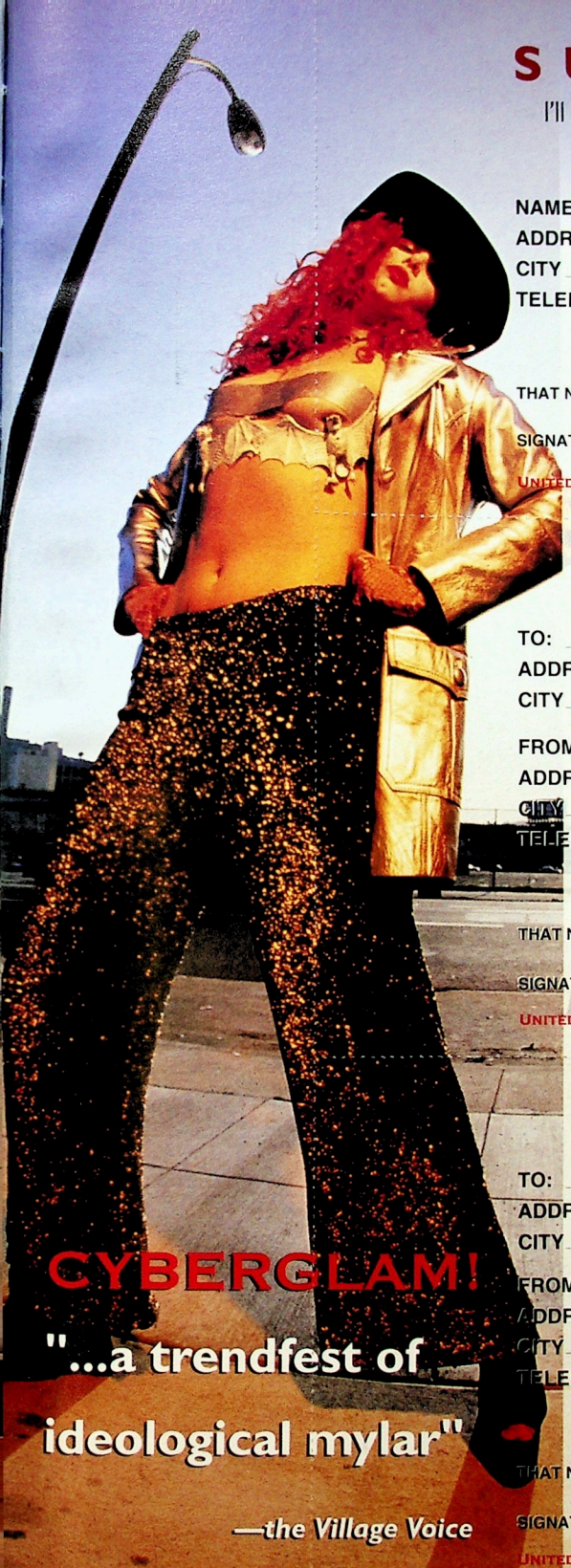

Luxor Las Vegas

Luxor Las Vegas



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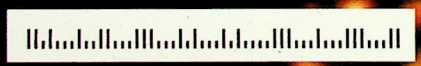

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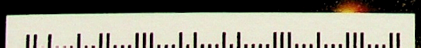
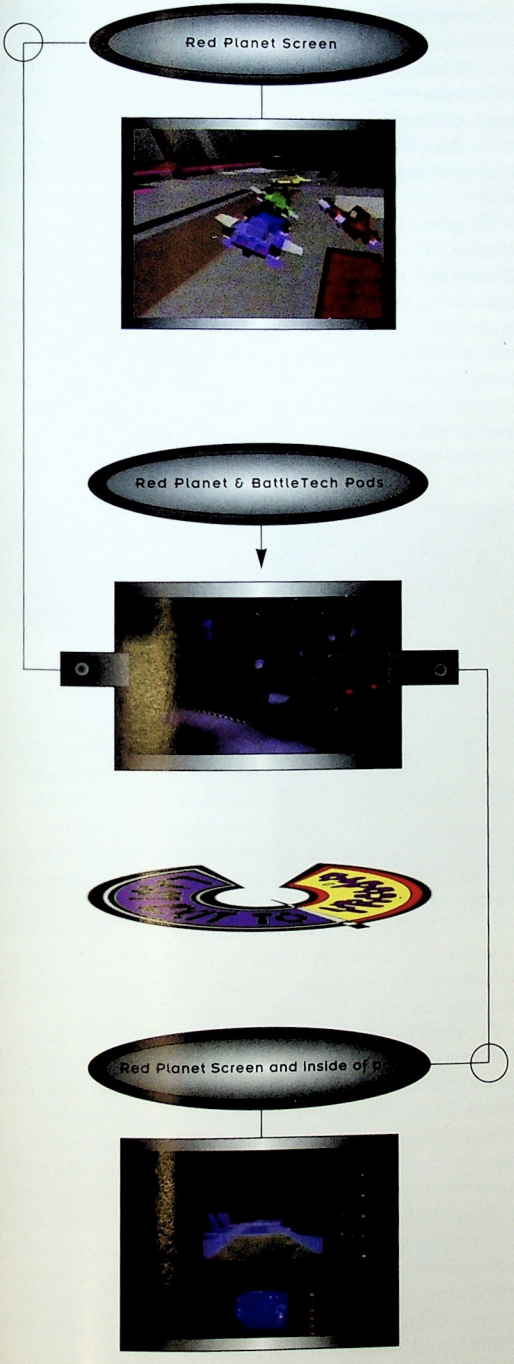
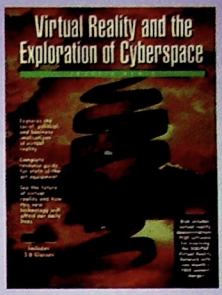


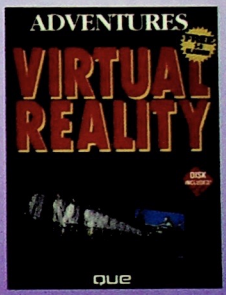


BIBLIO-TECH

NO VR LIBRARY SHOULD BE WITHOUT THESE NEW TITLES...



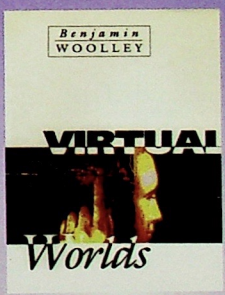
Virtual Reality and the Exploration of Cyberspace, by Francis Hamit (*SAMS Publishing, $26.95, 1993*).
Surprisingly simple exposition of everything you need to know, it runs from straightforward reportage of the history to chatty discussion with the relevant players. Comes with simulation software, 3D glasses, an extensive bibliography and an introduction by Jerry Pournelle.



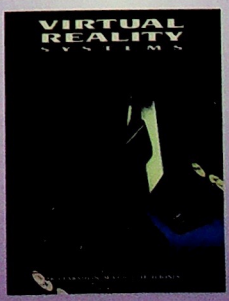
Adventures in Virtual Reality, by Tom Hayward (*Que, $24.95, 1993*).
As above, minus the social implications, plus how-to guides for programmers. Comes with VRcade software, 3D glasses and a preface by Howard Rheingold.

The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality, by Michael Heim (*Oxford University Press, $21.95, 1993*).
Easy-to-follow philosophy. OK, so I already read Heidegger and studied Boolean algebra. Even so, Heim gracefully touches on the ideas, and opens the doors on various interesting questions. Comes with foreword by Myron Krueger.

Future Visions, edited by Philip Hayward and Tana Wollen (*British Film Institute, 1993*).
A bunch of clever bastards from down under (mostly) explain new technologies of the screen for you, from HDTV to multimedia to three chapters on VR. Pleasingly luddite in parts.



Virtual Worlds, by Benjamin Wooley (*Blackwell, 1993*).
Wooley by name, but not by nature. Journalistic, thorough and British, Wooley takes us through VR concept by concept, from Simulation to Discovery, by way of Artificial Intelligence and Hypertext, unlikely as it may seem. No preface at all.



Virtual Reality Systems, edited by Earnshaw, Gigante and Jones (*Academic Press, 1993*).
Academic by name and nature, *VR Systems* has lots of equations, diagrams, black-and-white illustrations, and more equations. Not for the faint-hearted general reader, but hideously comprehensive nonetheless. Foreword by Henry Fuchs, Frederico Gil Professor of Computer Science, University of North Carolina University at Chapel Hill. So there.

Trumbull rides to choose from, a trilogy of past, present *and* future. *In Search of the Obelisk* is a motion-based simulator with a 180° screen; each module holds 15 people and runs 4 minutes. *Luxor Live* is a talk-show event screening a solar eclipse live from Egypt with spooky consequences, featuring Kleiser-Walczak's **Synthespians**— realistic characters computer-generated by bouncing high-density light off actors' joints and other important bits. *The Theater of Time* is a sensorama experience that sorts the sheep from the goats. A 70 foot vertical screen confronts an audience in the world's steepest-ever gradient of

Theatre of Time at Luxor

seats, with an instant apocalypse. The pure of heart will see something like the New Jerusalem, while poorly-motivated individuals will see something even nastier.

Luxor Las Vegas, 3900 Las Vegas Boulevard, South, Las Vegas, Nevada 89119-1000, (800) 288-1000.

MAKE ME WET

For the ultimate dip into VR experience (circa 1993), you'll have to trek to the **Cancun Convention Center** in Mexico, where the **Multi-Sensorial Center** is rumored to be opening. It's a $100 million "immersive media and virtual reality attraction," with the emphasis on virtual water sports, featuring **AquaThought's Dolphin Theme Area**, complete with VActor Dolphins. And if you want to press the fish, a **Dolphin Encounter Platform** where you float on a virtual water bed listening to 3D virtual dolphins feeding signals directly into your brain. I'm not making this stuff up. Probably.

AquaThought (310) 316-4563

TOURING MACHINES

Of course, a new entertainment isn't truly American unless it's being taken out on the road like a presidential candidate.

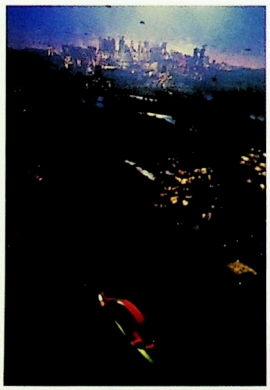
Reality + from Virtual Image is a full-immersion gamepod with a seven-foot wide, two-tiered platform and a bloody big rod and trigger. The graphics make this one look like the first serious attempt at building the Metaverse (cf. *Snow Crash*, by Neal Stephenson). A standard American city with blocks of high rises and hovercars buzzing over your head that you can blast to pixels. It's an OK Corral kind of a game, as you stalk the mean streets (and office blocks) in search of someone to shoot. And you can fly on a virtual hang-glider. That's right. A virtual hang-glider. These people don't seem to understand that the fun of hang-gliders is getting yourself splattered over the landscape. What's next? Virtual bungee cords?

Even on foot, after 15 minutes peering round corners for your opponent, you'll have looked in every bloody closet in the place. But it isn't size that counts, I'm assured. If you don't have that kind of time available, there are "teleporters" dotted about in various rooms for shortcuts, reminiscent of *Clue*.

Unsurprisingly, Reality + is developed from military and NASA simulations, and the company continues to manufacture stuff for those guys. VR industry analyst Greg Panos is enthusiastic. "This is already head and shoulders ahead of Virtuality in field of view and helmet weight, and streets ahead in image complexity and update rate." But frankly, this still looks and feels too much like Legoland for my taste, including the little plastic hand with the gun you have to follow everywhere.

The game is available at the Center of Science and Industry in Columbus, Ohio. Another unit is touring around Colorado Springs (although there is interest in Europe in installing them as mall entertainment). But mostly this is an eye-catching device for trade shows at the moment. Virtual Images takes LBE to mean leasing their system to malls and trade shows on a short-term basis, anything from 2 hours to 2 months, with fresh software to be available 3 times a year. Jeff Maresh of Virtual Images says, "You have to follow the money, and trade shows are more lucrative than putting them into the malls."

Virtual Images, 4356 Langport Rd., Columbus, OH 43220, (614) 459-1232



Theatre of Time at Luxor

WE'VE GOY BIG BALLS

If you really want to go flying, the answer is **CyberTron**, a "Seven-foot gimbaled gyro mechanism" (anyone for Jabberwocky?) from **Straylight**. Taking a leaf out of *Lawnmower Man*, they stick a VR helmet on you and strap you inside a big ball. Totally immersed with three degrees of freedom, you can make yourself sick, or do yourself an Isadora Duncan on the helmet cables. I can't tell you who is manufacturing the helmet, except to say they used to blow people up for a living.

This is the only game so far that I've seen that grabs you with the graphics the way you want VR to grab you, and you get a more physical experience grappling with the gyrotron frame than you get from just holding a joystick.

In **Cozmik Debris**, their first game (with no extra added Zappa whatsoever), you calmly pilot your Spanish Galleon amongst the gaily dancing dolphins. Then you spot the floating corpses and things get a little out of hand. The game sinks your galleon on a iceberg, then draws you downriver, while the "oddest bad guys in the business" make your life hell. Then you're moving through the air under your own steam to a space station and out down a black hole. Quite a trip for "all in 3-4 minutes." Keep that throughput coming.

New games will be released quarterly. The new one is called **Bonk**. To an Englishman, this immediately implies virtual sex, but unfortunately it's only bumping "asteroids in a rubber room." Still, you can Bonk your Cozmic Debris to your heart's content at theme parks across the world, notably Disneyworld on Pleasure Island.

Straylight, Warren, NJ, (908) 580-0086. Around $5 for 3-4 minutes.

Mowing a similar lawn, you might recall an old Jack Kirby character called Metron who swanned round the universe in a cosmic armchair. **Orbotron** and **RPI** are creating the **CYBER-POD**, which will take the Orbotron gyroscope and put **Cyberchair** from RPI inside it. The Cyberchair has a VR helmet, so you too can zip about the galaxy in comfortable style—aside from "additional sensory effects" like explosion thumps, cold jets of air, hot flushes and low frequency rumble. More like a mid-life crisis than a good time to my way of thinking.
RPI, (415)495-4460, Orbotron, (619)757-6900.

CLOSE BUT NO SEGA

I must say, I can't help but feel that all of this misses the point. If you're designing a game to keep kids off the streets, why not keep them

From StrayLight Corp.Kosmik Debris

off the streets entirely. If you're going to build a virtual arcade, you might as well build it in virtual space.

360° 3D and stereo surround sound add up to **Sega VR** (previously the Virtua) for the Genesis system [*see* MONDO # 9], still under $200 by Christmas. The games retail at 60-70 bucks apiece, and feature good old-fashioned cyberpunk themes—nuclear pirates across apocalyptic wastelands, intergalactic search-and-destroy missions, "engines roar and metal crushes in pulsating stereo sound." Oh, and best of all, and quite coincidentally, there's **Matrix Runner**. As "an elite super-hacker," you chase down your mysteriously missing colleagues amongst "strange semi-humans" in "the Matrix." Yes, it's our old friend cyberspace.

That's the VR, this is where the *virtual* arcade comes in.

The unholy alliance of **AT&T** and **Sega** is bringing you **The Edge 16**, available for $100-$150, Summer of 1994 (no relation—unless you can think of a productive reason to plug U2 into a Sega Genesis slot). The Edge 16 (basically a modem with knobs on) plugs directly into the Genesis system and adds 128K RAM with four slots for adding custom game enhancement cards. An add-on keyboard will put you in touch with a game players' cyberspace of 10 million square-eyed twitchers across the world. For the first time, this modem sends voice and graphic information on a single line, giving you the ability to goad your opponent as you lop his graphic head off.

P. F. Magic (San Francisco interactive CD-ROM makers) makes the games themselves. Enhancement and extension cards will allow you to "customize your wizards and golems" for role-playing games, or add complexity to "puzzle" and "board" games. AT&T thinks the cards ($25 each) could be the "living trading cards" of the future, but they haven't announced who's providing the bubblegum. John Scull, managing director of P.F. Magic, envisages building your own virtual NFL team to play in a cross-country league. But he doesn't say who gets to have a virtual Joe Montana, how much he's going to cost, or if you can ever get him on the field.

What's more, cards are in development for BBS access—to **The ImagiNation Network**, formerly the The Sierra Network, AT&T's partnership with Sierra On-Line. It features D&D style games and CyberPlace—a hypertextual map where "members enter the electronic amusement park and then travel to different lands." But what is really special is **FaceMaker**, with which users can create visual images of the inner self they want you to believe in. There's also a graffiti clubhouse. Swell, now you can mark turf in cyberspace.

So, what's the deal here? Along with the new **Sega Channel** broadcasting direct to your cable-ready (generally available in 1994), and the full-body joystick the **Activator** [*see* MONDO # 9], these are all the peripherals you need. Put them together and you get the virtual arcade, which saves all you agoraphobic console jockeys from ever having to leave the house again. Except, sorry, right now they don't work together. (Luxor will be putting in a Sega arcade, but that's scarcely the same thing—although I might add that RPI claims to be set-

ting up **ImagiNode** (for the PC) to jack the Cyberchair into a glorified virtual BBS—just as soon as they find someone with awfully deep pockets and a charitable disposition. And the chair's going to set you back $75, 000. How deep are *your* pockets? And a company called Objective Communications plans to offer Virtual City, sporting office space on the Internet, with another map-styled GUI that sounds about as immersive as a paddling pool.)

It looks to me like Sega (and AT&T, TCI, Time-Warner, and Sierra On-Line) have secured a major outpost in cyberspace (with a big ™ spraypainted on the wall), but they're not about to let you play in it fully, or even admit that it exists yet. Perhaps they're waiting for what Diana Hawkins calls "A-Lifes," slip-on rôle constructs with "motivations and personalities of their own," and, presumably, a biology and a physics to match. Either that, or Christmas *next* year.

AT&T and Sega's The Edge 16

I suppose I could tell you to hold on to your cash until the market flatlines and they come up with the integrated unit plus full-blown imagination, but I'll save my breath. Built-in obsolescence is the human condition, after all. Happy Conspicuous Consumption, and God Bless Us Everyone.

Alternate Worlds Syndrome

Michael Heim, author of The Metaphysics of Virtual Reality, *spends a lot of time thinking about the effects of VR. I met him at SIGGRAPH '93 in Anaheim. On one side of us, an interactive art exhibit was teaching black kids not to dis cops. Next to it, the Department of Defense's ARPA was running telepresence simulated war games, with participants lined up to dogfight imaginary planes flying in a VR computer somewhere near Washington. Elsewhere, cyborgs of various persuasions were doing their thing. It was mind-numbingly surreal...*

MONDO 2000: What is "Alternate Worlds Syndrome"?

MICHAEL HEIM: Alternate Worlds Syndrome is when one aspect of the psyche remains in a virtual world when you return to primary reality or enter another virtual world. A lot of the expectations your psyche develops in one world are inappropriately carried over into the other world. For example, if you want to fly in the real world, and you point your finger as if you were in VR, you're not going to fly. People do this! People who are in virtual environments come back to primary reality and try to do things that they do in VR, and it just doesn't happen.

VR researchers like Steve Ellis at NASA talk about this phenemonon—he comes out of the headset and dataglove amazed that there are things in primary reality he can't do anymore. He notices this and it's a little shocking. He's a visual psychologist. I think when we as a culture spend more time and energy in virtual worlds, it will be kind of scary.

M2: We have commanders and generals who are spending time in virtual worlds, making critical decisions of life and death. Will they ever come to a point where they won't be able to differentiate between the real world and the virtual world? Particularly under stress?

MH: Well, in July, 1987, on the USS Vincennes,

VIRTUAL MALLS

FORTRESS OF FUN

Two years into the future, and VR has been totally assimilated by mall culture. That's the vision of **KIDS PLACE** in New York City. "Cross a theme park with a shopping center, and that's what we're doing. The whole mission is to be a socially responsible, environmentally correct, family entertainment center. We want to make it an interactive theme park-shopping experience-community center." Indeed, the whiff of political rectitude is overpowering.

This revolutionary step forward in Disneyesque social science is going to be located in the Coliseum at Columbus Circle. It may think of itself of interactive museum/language school/Epcot Center foremost, but the giftshop has taken over the asylum, or rather, to be a little more fair,

Captain Will Rogers III gave the order to fire the Aegis anti-missile guns. He was sure from his reading of his instruments that they were firing on an Iranian F-14 jet. Now, not too far from there, a carrier saw the very same object, but their data was quite different. They saw a commercial aircraft, and they treated it as such. So, you can have two different virtual worlds. The advantage of the technology is that they are able to see through darkness, through fog, through difficult conditions, and see with great precision. And they have to take what they see as real, because it's life or death for them. But at the same time, there is a disjunct between virtual and real reality. And there is pain. That Iranian commercial aircraft is the first sign of this kind of pain. It's the gap between what we *will* see and what we *can* see.

M2: SIGGRAPH '93 is the largest collection of dissociative, inhuman environments I've ever experienced. There's something very disturbing about the militaristic mentality of this room. Have we totally lost our moral outrage?

MH: VR is the culmination of Western technology. So, it brings out the worst in us... and the best in us.

M2: I think it's desensitizing.

MH: We've put our faith in instrumentation and technology. That's where we've put our chips as a culture. We're trying to create environments that we can control utterly. This is the pyramid of Western Civilization. It's our cathedral, and we'll be remembered for it, for better or worse.

M2: I think when someone has been exposed to this kind of electronic reality, their brains have been damaged beyond repair. So, I think we should have a natural preserve of people who have never been exposed to VR, so we can check in with them and say, "Are we OK?"

MH: I had a very brilliant Taoist teacher who said that it was very hard for Americans to meditate and look inside their bodies with their minds, because they looked inside themselves as if they were watching a television screen. They saw themselves as something outside.

M2: VR is a natural extension of the dissociation we get from television.

MH: And so it's a philosophical question: How can we use VR to regain our souls? M2

Wes Thomas

---

the entertainment side of the business has been integrated into the entire mall experience. For instance, one mall strip is to be a walk-through aquarium, and one elevator is to have an outsize clown mouth for a door (scary!), and en route, "a digital scanner system will read shapes and animate their own body with funny looking 'stuff' inside (similar to the movie *Total Recall*)." In all, some 45% of the center is to be set aside for strictly entertainment functions, like the petting zoo, the planetarium, the interactive cartoon museum, a simulated Amazonian rainforest, and much much more.

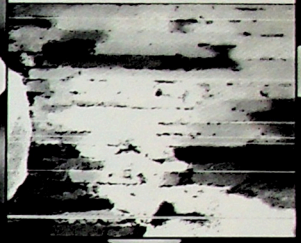
Now the VR Playground itself is supposed to be set up for inter-family competition, with customizable options in the VR. There will be underwater and deep space simulations, and other "carefully selected" electronic games—"no war games or activities encouraging violence of any kind will be permitted at KIDS PLACE." Well, except for the planned International Karate Championships, that is.

I hesitate to say bad things about anyone who means to provide "Ben and Jerry's present Wavy Gravy Live," but there is a sinister undercurrent:

continues on next page

everything you will hear
in the next seventyfour minutes
IS TRUE.

CABARET VOLTAIRE:
INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE



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continued from previous page

"KIDS PLACE Safety Department: Families will be given a non-threatening first hand experience with local police department. Real policemen (many retired) will be stationed in a fun and educational, real police station. This will be Command Central for the totally unique KIDS PLACE security guard system. Because children's safety is of supreme importance, parents will be offered the opportunity to have their children finger printed and videotaped for their own records (police will not keep these records).

"As Kids enter the building, they will receive an electronic track finder bracelet which has their picture stored electronically on it. If they wander through the wrong doors, they can be found almost immediately by typing their name into any one of the interactive kiosks in the facility. The child's picture will also be available on the security system so that the security police can assist in the child's location. In addition to the New York Police force, KIDS PLACE will engage its own police force that will dress exactly like different policemen from around the world. They will utilize state-of-the-art "*Star Trek* simulated" communication devices and be specialists in crowd control. Surveillance video cameras will be strategically placed and all precautionary measures will be employed."

And if that doesn't smell sufficiently of shopping in the New World Order, try the latest in full-immersion goldfish bowls: "The building will be tasteful and distinctive and command the attention of all passing cars as well as people walking past. The building facade could utilize one-sided glass (looking in from the street). Cars passing will see kids jumping and playing on several levels." Very tasteful. Still, not to worry. "The facility will utilize state of the environmental art systems that are designed to provide humans with a better sense of being. These systems have been proven to stimulate shopper's endurance and stimulate mental awareness... A Random Electrostatic Equalizer will be used to stablize the detrimental random electric fields that escape from electric cables and wires. This has proven to fight fatigue and increase productivity." Well, that's all right then.

MARKETING THE METAVERSE

BEWARE, THESE PEOPLE HAVE MORE THAN HEEDLESS HEDONISM ON THEIR MINDS.

CyberEvent (a promotion company based in New York) markets CyberTron for the trade show and mall rental side of LBE, and also do work with **Virtuality** machines [*see* MONDO #6]. This is by no means the end-point of their ambition.

Experiential Advertising™ [love that ™] is, according to CyberEvent President Dave Polinchook, "one of the most innovative applications for virtual reality technology. For the first time, consumers will be able to enter and, more importantly, interact with a corporate marketing message... Experiential Advertising is an excellent opportunity to influence the buying decisions of today's sophisticated consumer." Er... exactly. What we are talking about is virtual billboards. Sorry, "**Virtual Billboards™**." Can't these people wait for the billboards in space?

Those virtual billboards made their first appearance in a Bonk installation at the Sci-Fi Channel trade show in the Bay Area. Polinchock says: "With VR, you can't escape. And anything you promote with VR becomes automatically contemporary. Bubble Yum is now the cutting edge."

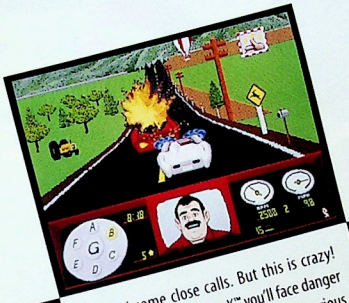
For those of you who switched off your radios and TVs for the last nine months, **Bubble Yum** took the "Bubble Yum Virtuality Mall Tour" across the country, starting out from that magical blend of witchcraft and addiction, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. But where else? For three minutes, the game pits four players on virtual motorbikes against each other (and a giant space chicken) to scavenge chunks of glop in outer space. Training kids to defend themselves by force of arms against their peers for candy. I like that.

Polinchock also plans a new Football game, with plenty of advertising. "People think there's something weird without it. Sponsors are highly visible normally. It's part of the flavor of the game." And who can argue with that?

Want to create your own virtual events? **CyberMind Corporation** says they'll rent (and operate) their Virtuality machines (up to 8, including the new Legend Quest, VTOL, or ExoRex II "robot with an attitude" games) for your next megaparty or mall promo or whatever. They're also opening the first VR entertainment centers in San Francisco in October and Kansas City to follow. *1 Embarcadero Center, Lobby level, Downtown San Francisco. (800) 49-CYBER.*

Meanwhile, W-Industries is now marketing their Virtuality machines independently (more than 350 sold in over 20 countries). They're also producing a VR battle game for Sega (available in the arcades sometime in 1994). And keep an eye out next year for a second generation of Virtuality machines with hi-res graphics and lighter, brighter visors. M2

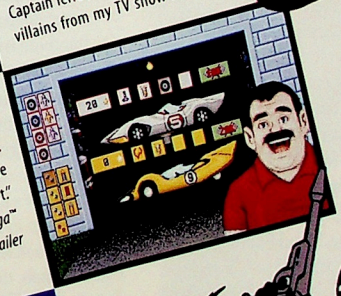
"My Most Dangerous Adventure Of All Will Never Be Shown On T.V.!"



"I've had some close calls. But this is crazy! In *The Challenge of Racer X*,™ you'll face danger two ways. First, you'll take on the mysterious Racer X™ in a 200MPH free-for-all. You'll need everything in the Mach 5's arsenal just to stay close . . . Autojacks to leap clear of danger, chopper-blades to cut through obstacles, even a new on-board CRT that allows you to

receive messages from Pops, Trixie, Spridle and Chim-Chim. And that's just the half of it. You'll also race against me from the cockpit of Racer X's incredible Shooting Star. But it won't be easy. Because Snake Oiler, Captain Terror, and all the evil villains from my TV show are

out to send you over the guardrails. So fasten your seatbelt. Because you're gonna rip around blind curves on icy mountain roads. Leap over rocky chasms. Witness horrible fiery crashes! Gosh, I hope no one gets hurt." Coming soon for Super Nintendo® and Sega™ Genesis.™ To order, visit your favorite retailer or call 1-800-245-7744.



Available for the IBM PC and compatibles.

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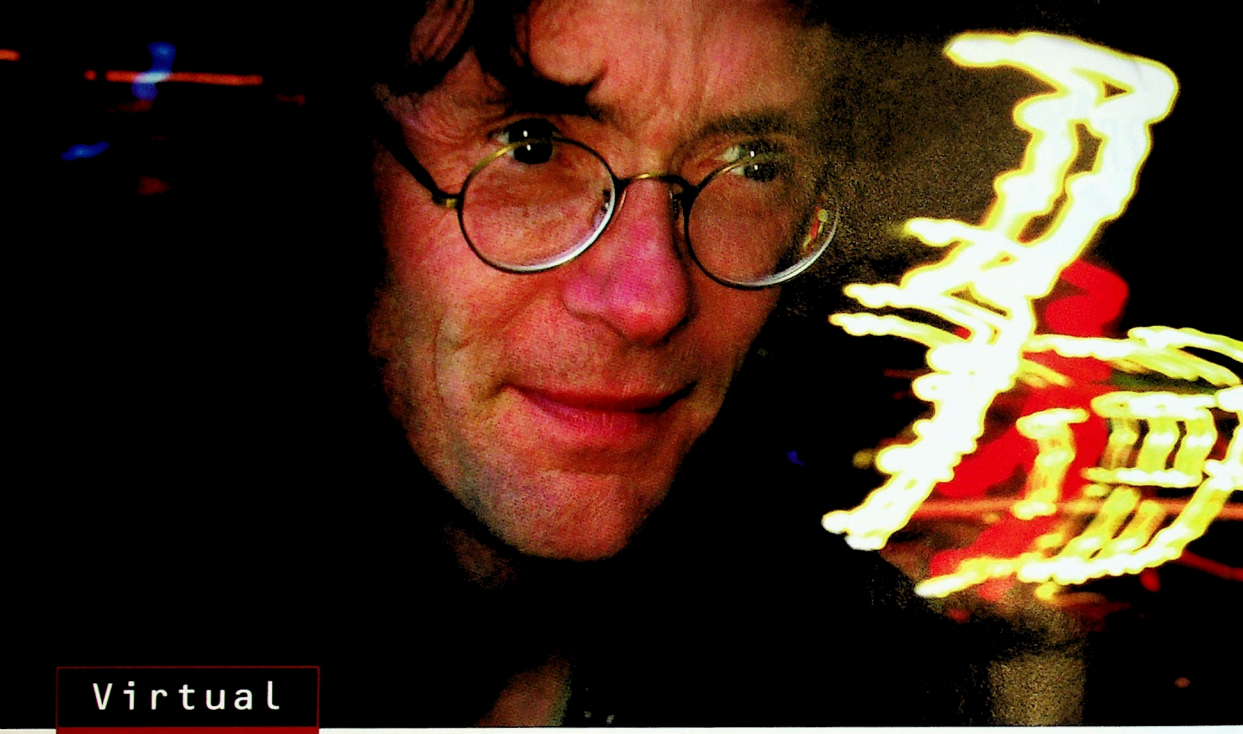


Virtual Light

Virtual Light
by William Gibson
Bantam Books, $21.95
325 pp.

As a pathologically competitive writer, I was really quite depressed by *Virtual Light*. I like to think that Bill's writing is so much more popular than mine because of some fluke of fate or publicity. But reading *Virtual Light*, I can painfully see that this book has best-seller qualities that none of my books will ever have. Oh well, a week's gone by, and my flattened ego is starting to pump itself up again. Except now I'm supposed to write this fucking review.

Commercially, the smartest move on Gibson's part is to narrate *Virtual Light* through the eyes of two young people—characters who could be drawn directly from today's slackers. Chevette Washington is a San Francisco bicycle courier, and Berry Rydell is an unsuccessful cop turned security guard. Both are observant and innocent; it is a pleasure to see the world of *Virtual Light* through their clear young eyes.

Here, for instance, is Chevette looking at an automatic teller machine in a bad neighborhood. "She sat there, watching it [*the ATM*] emerge from its armor, the way they do, shy and cautious, its cameras coming out too, to monitor the transaction." Perfect.

If I can say anything nasty at all—and I certainly want to—it's that sometimes the *naiveté* of Bill's characters seems *faux*. Like when Chevette's friend Skinner sends her out to try and sell "a crumbling cardboard box of those flat black things that had played music once," and later in the paragraph, Chevette sells "two of the round things." This is close to oval-headed Dolly and Jeffy spit-talking malapropisms and bloopers in the aw-ain't-that-cute *Family Circus* comic strip.

What else can I harsh on? Oh, the drugs, yeah, the drugs in *Virtual Light* suck. The only new drug in the book is 4-Thiobuscaline, also known as "dancer." Gibson is not a psychedelic guy, and dancer is indistinguishable from methedrine. It makes you mean, and if you're a guy it gives you a raging hard-on.

But there *is* a really cool scene in which Rydell confronts a dancer-freak named Turvey. Turvey has built a compressed-gas-powered gun whose "bullets" are grapefruit cans full of concrete, and he's holding his wife and children as hostages because he wants to meet the President (a black woman, this being 2005). Turvey has a fresh, bleeding tattoo of the Last Supper on his chest, only Jesus and the Apostles don't have faces. Turvey is a born-again Christian and is trying to kick his 4-Thiobuscaline habit, but just this afternoon at an AA-style meeting... *I love this so much we have to do an extended quote...*

Rudy Rucker

"He [*Turvey the dancer-freak*] openly horned a tablespoon of his substance of choice, took the podium by force, and delivered a thirty-minute rant on President Millbank's pantyhose and the assumed current state of her genitalia. He then exposed himself, masturbated but did not ejaculate, and left the basement of the First Baptist church."

Yaaar!

Interesting point here: if that passage were in the newspaper about a meth-freak in, say, Virginia Beach last week, it would seem kind of sad. But reading it about a dancer-freak in the future it seems funny, at least to those with a taste for that sort of thing. Gibson has often said that he uses his science-fiction as a way to get a calmer, more distanced, view of the present.

How about *Virtual Light*'s technology? Gibson daringly

Bart Nagel

uses all sorts of cool tech, but he tosses off the references to it as casual asides. This trick makes the tech seem that much more believable; it's a stylistic move that Robert Heinlein was the first to master. On the down side, being casual about future tech is a kind of cop-out; it means you don't have to deal with the details or the problems of introducing the tech. Gibson has remarked that his worlds are "one molecule thick." He doesn't care, and neither do the mass of readers, dammit.

Speaking of molecules, *slobber slobber*, there are some really neat bits about nanotechnology in *Virtual Light*. Like you can get armies of invisibly small machines that will build things for you; things like skyscrapers, a new tunnel to replace the trashed Bay Bridge, and, best of all, palm trees.

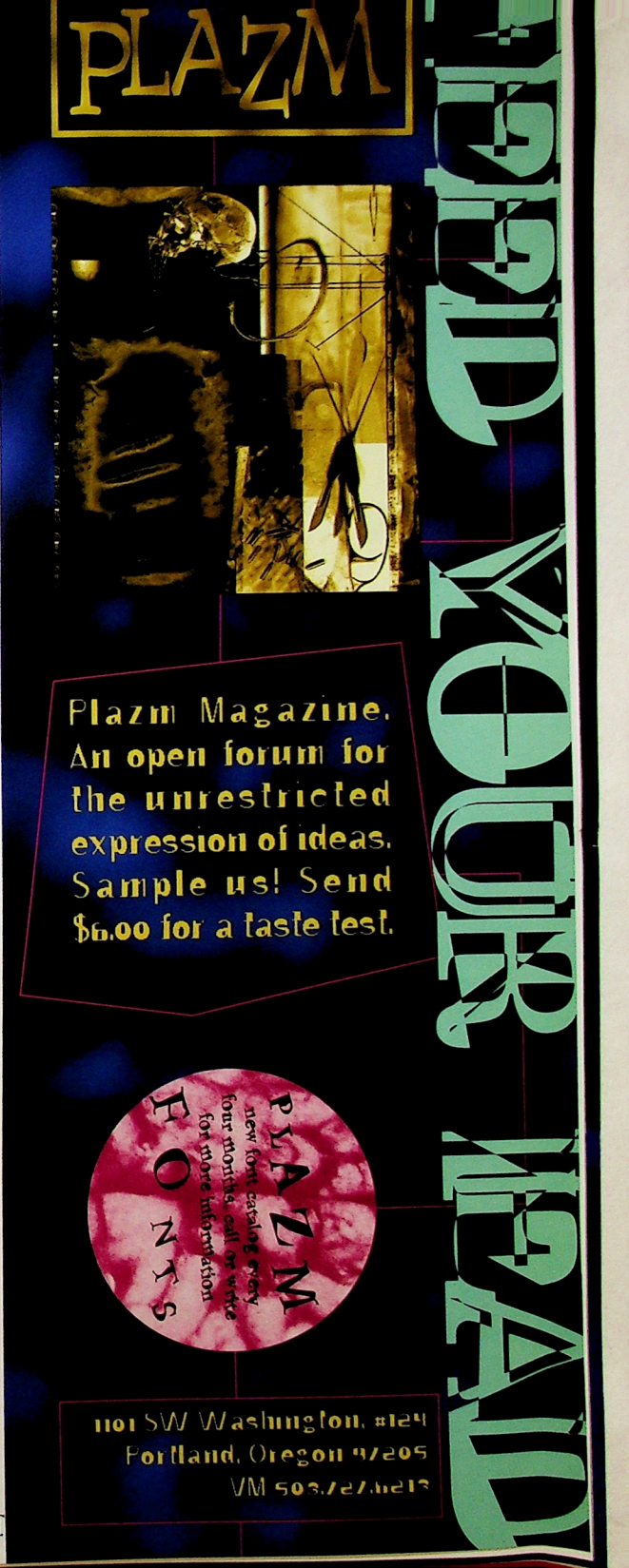
Regular perusers of MONDO may recognize the phrase "virtual light" as Stephen Beck's coinage to describe a technique of producing flashes of light in your eyes by stimulating them via electromagnetic fields. Gibson invokes virtual light as the method by which a certain pair of data-glasses projects images to your optic nerves. Rather than being a cyberspace interface as you might expect, the special glasses do nothing more than show one particular scene which happens to be of great financial consequence to the book's bad guys.

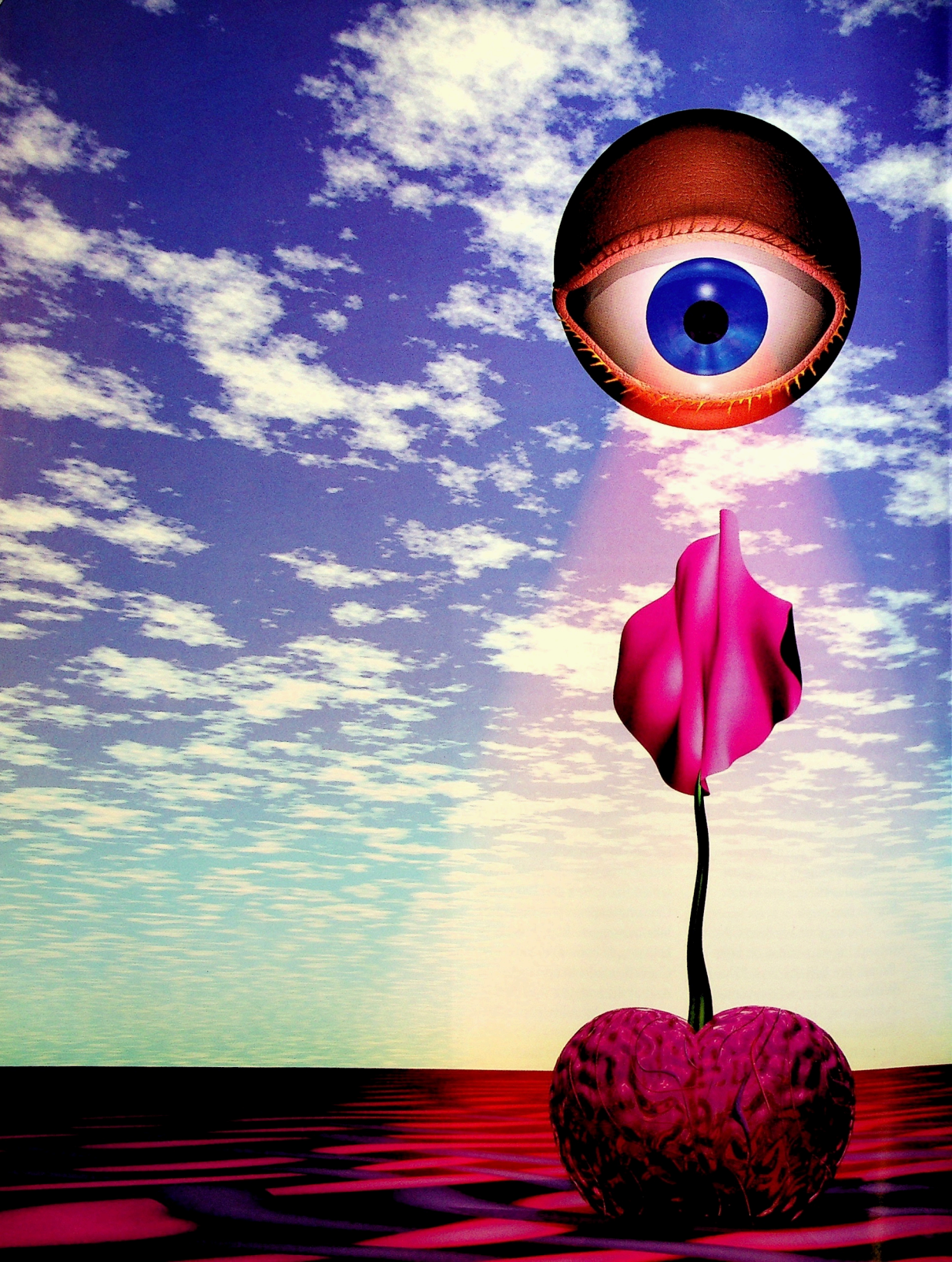
You might have seen Gibson this spring in a cameo on *Wild Palms*. Jim Belushi says, "This is William Gibson, who invented cyberspace," and Gibson ripostes, "Yes, and they'll never let me forget it." The word "cyberspace" is virtually absent from *Virtual Light*. But the book still has hackers on the Net, and videophones for using virtual reality to talk over the Net. Taken together, networked hackers and virtual reality are really the functional equivalent of today's cyberspace. But people don't have jacks in their skulls, as they did in my, ahem, 1981 *Spacetime Donuts*, or in Gibson's *Cyberspace* trilogy.

An especially cool bit of biotech in *Virtual Light* concerns the cure for AIDS. The cure comes thanks to J.D. Shapely, a male prostitute who develops a non-damaging strain of AIDS which is able to take over the physiological niche occupied by true AIDS. Having sex with Shapely makes AIDS-sufferers get well! By the time of the book, Shapely is a new modern saint. Everyone is being vaccinated with Shapely's strain of AIDS. "*Yet he lives in us now, and through him do we live*," reads the writing on a mural that shows Shapely, "wearing a black leather biker jacket and no shirt, being carried up to heaven by half a dozen extremely fruity-looking angels with long blond rocker hair."

So is there a moral to this tale? I ask only because Clute and Nicholls in their magisterial new *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* remark that "Today William Gibson seems on the verge of becoming SF's moralist." And oddly, when you think about it, *Virtual Light* is quite moral. The heroes are good because they have compassion for others and because they try to become excellent at what they do. Rydell would like to be a great cop, and Chevette wants to be a perfect bike-messenger. Rydell wants to help people in trouble, and Chevette wants to find love. And at the end, *yes*, they find each other. Morality pays off bigtime.

Virtual Light is on the *New York Times* best-seller list. I'm happy for you, Bill, I really am. But I guess I'll keep on writing unsuccessful science-laden books with rotten amoral forty-year-old characters. I just can't help myself. M2





Head from a binaural dummy 3d-CD "Virtual Reality" EROTICA

Chris Hudak

Cyborgasm: Algorithm/Cyborgasm
Private Erotica: Lasting Impressions Music Corporation

Oh, man. The bastiges. They did it to me again.

I can just see them in the MONDO House, seated around a table in Full Editorial Mode, planning it out, holding their bellies and rolling on the floor with laughter: "Then let's get him to review some of those 'virtual sex' CD's! Wouldn't that be great?!? PHHHBBBTTT-HAHAHAHAHA!"

"Virtual Audio is more fluid, for certain, than the best virtual reality system appears to the eyes. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS?"

- R.U. Sirius, MONDO 2000

"It's like being tied up & blindfolded at an orgy... and then being ignored."

- St. Jude, MONDO 2000

And you just *know* that's what the makers of these things do: record people doing... well, *other people*, mostly... slap the word "cyber" somewhere on it, and *PHHHHBBBTTTHAHAHAHA*, all the way to the bank.

Cyborgasm and *Private Erotica* are two "virtual reality erotica" CDs consisting largely of very intimate, extremely high-fidelity recordings of groups, individuals or couples (or *groups* of couples, or a couple of—look, just for*get* it, OK?) engaging in various sexual acts. (*Cyborgasm*, produced by *Future Sex* magazine's own Lisa Palac, notes that it was "recorded live and on location," which kind of makes you wonder how else they might have done it. Teledildonics? Remote Control-Freaks? Somebody—certainly not *me*—should look into this.)

ILLUSTRATION BY MARK LANDMAN

Private Erotica, the less ambitious of the two CDs, eschews the artsy and gets right down to business with black-and-white packaging and the Parade O' Generic First Names. There's Julie and Jennifer, passing the wee hours performing cunnilingus on each other; there's Cindy and Stephen plugging away in what *sounds* like the Missionary Position, although it's hard to be sure; Robert's alone, working the Night Shaft; and if you're *really* good, maybe we'll let you listen to *Richard and Wayne*.

*Yum*mers. *Private Erotica* bookends these sessions with two mixes of an audio track called "CyberSex!"—by Tone Def, and *there's* a truism for your collection—which has got to be one of the goofiest things I've heard this year. If you're one of those people in whom lust and laughter are excited at the same moments and by the same things, I suppose it'll prime your pump, but I can't help thinking of the latter "Extra Wet Mix" as anything but the "Extra Flatulent Mix."

A Lasting Impression Music Corp.'s Barnaby 2000.

But I digress.

Cyborgasm aims a little higher in the name of art, interspersing its more theatrical intimate sessions with spoken-word pieces by such very-very nanonotables as Susie Bright, Annie Sprinkle, Mistress Kat and Don Bajema. Then there are real talents like Diana Trimble. (What's a high class act like her doing here?) It's just that it doesn't help any. As with *Private Erotica*, the failure here is a conceptual one, and it's right down there with the ones and zeroes—*there is nothing remotely "cyber" about any of this. It's a fucking CD. Literally.* You'd think that grown people who can drive cars, keep jobs, operate recording equipment, and at least *fail* at an attempt at cover art would be able to grasp the utter vacuum here in the cyber department… and you, sir or madam or Men's Movement supporter, would be wrong. Also, realizing that the money you've spent on this "cybersex" could probably have gone toward getting some *real* action is enough to take the prong out of anybody's pepperoni flat-bang. There's nothing wrong with listening to this stuff if it turns you on, and much of it may very well do just that—but it's just audio porn; the best I can say is that the VD audio [*that's 3D AUDIO; knock it off, Hudak—Eds.*] is certainly more convincing to the ears than other

current forms of virtual reality are to the eyes. But do not even suspect you're getting *The Lawnmower Man*; all you're getting is Susie and Annie and Kat and Cindy and—shudder—*Richard and Wayne* and Tone Def. And with that and thirty-five cents, you can find your own partner in the personal ads, unless it's Sunday. Then you're screwed. Or rather, you're *not*.

Perhaps I'm being needlessly harsh… perhaps the "virtual sex" CD concept does have *one or two* "cyber" aspects going for it, such as:

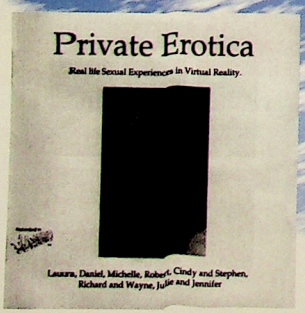
A) You can "jack in" your CD player to an electrical source, and

B) You can cut up the CD into pieces and put them over your eyes. The silvery shards look like mirrorshades! *Yow!*

So, here's what it comes down to, friends: go *out*, and *buy* the *CD* and a have a *virtual* sexual encounter for *$13.95…*

Or—eeek!—have the *real thing*. With a *person*. Who will probably come to *you*. For *free*. Hrrmm.

Now take those stupid silver things out of your eyes. M2


Private Erotica
Real life Sexual Experiences in Virtual Reality.
Laura, Daniel, Michelle, Robert, Cindy and Stephen, Richard and Wayne, Julie and Jennifer

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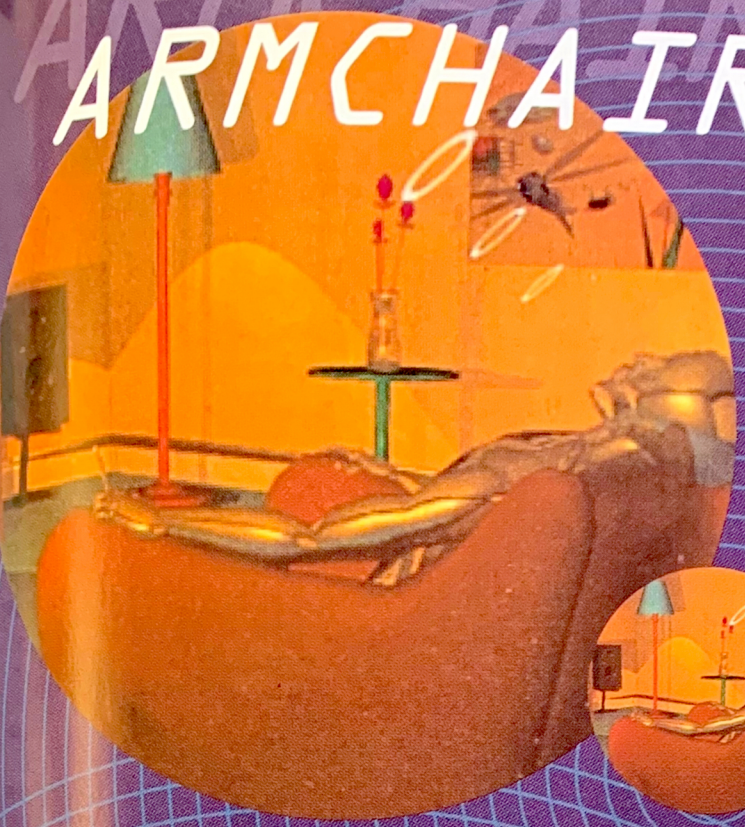

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(or machine) has gone before
Artificial Intelligence is not
so much the sound of the future
as the sound of a time
that has no past.
-Melody Maker

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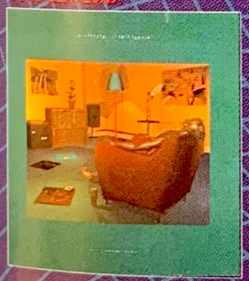

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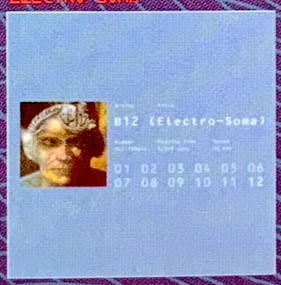

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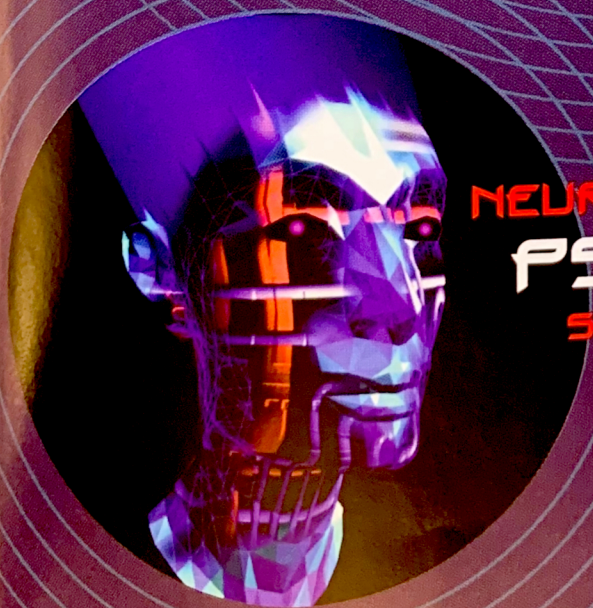

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Manga
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jin

Japanese Language Learning & Pop Culture

by Chris Hudak

Newsstand Price: $4.50
Subscription: $30.00/year
Mangajin Inc.
200 N. Cobb Pkwy., Suite 421
Marietta, GA 30062
(404) 590-0091

This Japan thing seems to be a running *motif* in my crazed life lately, but hey, it puts *ebi-maki* on the table. *Mangajin*—thanks for asking—is a monthly magazine which teaches the casual student about Japanese language and culture, mostly through the detailed translation of Japanese *manga*, or comics. The title "Mangajin" is both a visual and aural pun: in Japanese, *manga* refers to comics and their characters, and *jin* is a suffix meaning "person." Together, "mangajin" literally means "comic-person," or comic character. And obviously, for us *gaijin*—"foreign-persons"—"mangajin" sounds a lot like "magazine."

Manga are, quite simply, an amazing peephole into the kinkier convolutions of the Japanese psyche. Even the lamest lingual slacker can pick up a lot from the talky, idiom-ridden dialogues of the *manga*. Not only do they let you in on subtle cultural in-jokes—not only do they make you once again grateful to live in a country wherein there exists more than two recognizable art styles—but you might even sound like a *shibui no gaijin*[1] the next time you get a chance to speak Japanese. (A word of caution, though: Japanese is not—trust me on this one—a language in which it behooves one to Helen-Keller one's way around. Witness the ominous inclusion in each issue of a warning table, indicating the various politeness levels one must juggle in attempting to speak Japanese. You're best off handling these suggestions with the same deadly seriousness you might handle, say, a small thermonuclear device. Inadvertent insults, while not actually obscene in the Western sense, can be very grating on the Japanese ear. In fact, greeting a superior in casual-speak can be a lot like whacking his back and braying "Yo, butthead!")

Mangajin has its own cast of *manga* favorites and regulars, including *Obatarian* (a large and obnoxious mom-type character who I cannot, to save my soul, see as anything but a kind of Asian Roseanne Barr), *What's Michael* (a question which fans of this dry, often-surreal cat comic have likely been asking themselves for years), the adventures of *Tanaka-kun* the Salaryman anti-hero, and even the occasional American strip—like *Calvin and Hobbes* or *The Far Side*—translated *from* English *to* Japanese.

But don't think of *Mangajin* as some kind of cutesy *Hello Kitty/Kerekero-keroppi*-laden fluff rag. It has its hard info too: detailed vocabulary lessons-by-example, articles and shorts on daily Japanese life and speech, spotlights on cultural figures, taboos and bloopers, a decent classifieds section for bringing readers from all over the world together (it's where I found my Tokyo connections), and, of course, reviews of the hottest *atarashii*[2] books, movies and software for the budding Nippophile. A recent *Mangajin* masthead boasts of no less than Jack Seward as a contributing editor; he's a sort of *gaijin* Goodwrench-san of all things Japanese. He even has a regular column, "Outrageous Japanese," detailing all the hip, impolite, lewd and dangerous street Japanese you could ever get your *gaijin* ass round-kicked for.

Finally, let's not forget the pragmatic reasons for picking up a copy of *Mangajin*. First, as one of a handful of publications catering to those interested in Japanese language and pop culture—*New Tokyo Journal* and *Hira-Gana Times* also come to mind, and yes, Hawking, I *will* be writing about them—*Mangajin* is a great communication tool if you're planning a trip to Japan and would like to find pen-pals and/or native guides beforehand. (I *highly* recommend this method of visiting the Land of the Rising Sun as opposed to mine, i.e., flying in blind, and alone, and tired, *and* drunk…) Second, *Mangajin* will soon be running a regular Japan-related career section for those interested in work in the States and in Japan—this I take the time to note only because having a job means having money, and this is *another* key point I failed to fully appreciate until I first worked out just *how much* those drinks in Tokyo's Roppongi district were costing me. *Mangajin* is a little comic-coated shot of culture that's easy to swallow… and in any case, can you imagine a better start to a day than reading a reverse-engineered *Calvin and Hobbes* to learn the precise Japanese for "Gross-o-rama!" "Transmogrifier," or "evil alien booger beings"?

Well, all *right* then. M2

[1] C'mon man, if I told you *everything*, ya wouldn't go buy the magazine, would ya? Logic! *Logic!*
[2] It means "new," what did you *think* would follow "hottest"? C'mon man, keep *up* with me.

Illustration by Kevin Evans

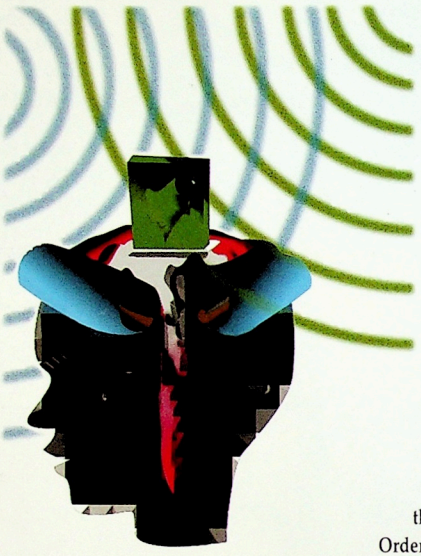
Xandor Speaks: MIND KONTROL ULTRA

DEAR DEHUMANIZED DIGITAL DILETTANTES: Hello, hello, are we asleep again? Are we nodding off at the wheel as we trundle down the data superhighway? As CompuServe hails a "New World Order" of "altered ideologies" and ecofascist Al Gore unveils his Trojan Horse **data superhighway designed to trap millions of cognitive dissidents** into revealing their interests and knowledge online to NSA digital snoops. Don't you realize PGP really means **Pretty Good Prison**? That deep-cover NSA datacops have been behind it all along? *We live in interesting times.* Did you know that **the Mars Observer was shut down when it sent back pictures of pyramids and cities?** Or that **Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9, scheduled to impact Jupiter on July 22, 1994 is really the ultimate doomsday "Alternative 3" scenario of the New World Order?** And if that doesn't fry your synapses, how about the Office of Naval Intelligence and the DIA's **massive covert ELF weather- and mind-control war** amongst Russia, Japan, France, and Israel, creating massive floods, earthquakes, cancer, AIDS, and other plagues in the process?

Remember, **when you wake up agitated at 3:00 in the morning, that's when they're running ELF transmitters to program your dreams.** It's also the time when most UFOs appear—*quelle coincidence!* Let me explain: **They send out subliminal signals over all radio and TV channels and use microwave antennas to beam instructions via ELF modulation into your heads to reinforce hypnotic screen memories of alien doctors in spaceships, when they're actually Frankensteinian Nazi scientists running bizarre eugenics experiments in underground tunnels created by massive subterreaning machines which are the cause of that slowly moving hum you hear underground in Taos and other parts of the Southwest.**

Nancy Sternglod

But you don't have to have an intranasal brain implant to be under their control. **Hemisync tone sequences, subliminal instructions, reverse-speech hidden messages, magnetic signals, infrasonics, ultrasonics** (like Hitler) are all part of the total panoply. And throw away your Synchro-Energizer: the CIA programs mind-machine circuitry to create zombie automatons. In fact, the entire candybrain **New Age movement, invented by LSD-monger Willis Harman under directions from the British Tavistock Institute in London, is a massive MI6-controlled deception operation designed to hypnotize millions and convert them into slaves to the New World Order.** Gurus are operatives duped by hypnosis and taught occult magic tricks by the Illuminati who formed the Thule Society which programmed Hitler and the Nazi-Star Wars Dr. Strangelove Wernher von Braun and psychofascist Werner Erhard and Oscar Ichazo. Incidentally, Oscar's daddy was Brazil's war minister and Oscar used **Arica mind-control techniques to convert Esalen into a New World Order training camp, working with Willis Harman** of the notorious Stanford Research Institute (which runs the Internet). Chief propagandist for the Aquarian Conspiracy, he proclaimed in *Global Mind Change* that "the only way for the U.S. to regain moral leadership" was to focus on the Illuminati-designed Great Seal (on all U.S. paper money). By these signs shall ye know them: the Orb and Compass, the Eye and Pyramid.



Have you figured it out yet? OK, let me spell it out for all you pathetic autists: **They know *exactly* which ELF frequencies, waveforms, and code sequences (brainwave-frequency region pulse-code modulation superimposed widely on power lines, radio, TV, and microwave transmissions) to use and can create any emotion or pathology** they please. *You* don't. And you probably don't own a *real* ELF detector! You poor bleating sheep don't even know they're ALREADY using **ELF generators in malls, restaurants, and bars** to maximize throughput and revenues—even magnetizing fans in air conditioners and refrigerators to create pulsed ELF waves to zap you. It will all be duly captured by **Hillary's SmartCard which will store your brainwaves and monitor all transactions everywhere you go, so the Thought Police can download it any old time via the data superhighway and issue the ultimate ACCESS DENIED.** By the way, you can't escape ELF—there's no way to shield low-frequency magnetic waves—but I'll reveal secret techniques for defending yourself in the next MONDO... unless *they* get to me first.

—Xandor Korzybski

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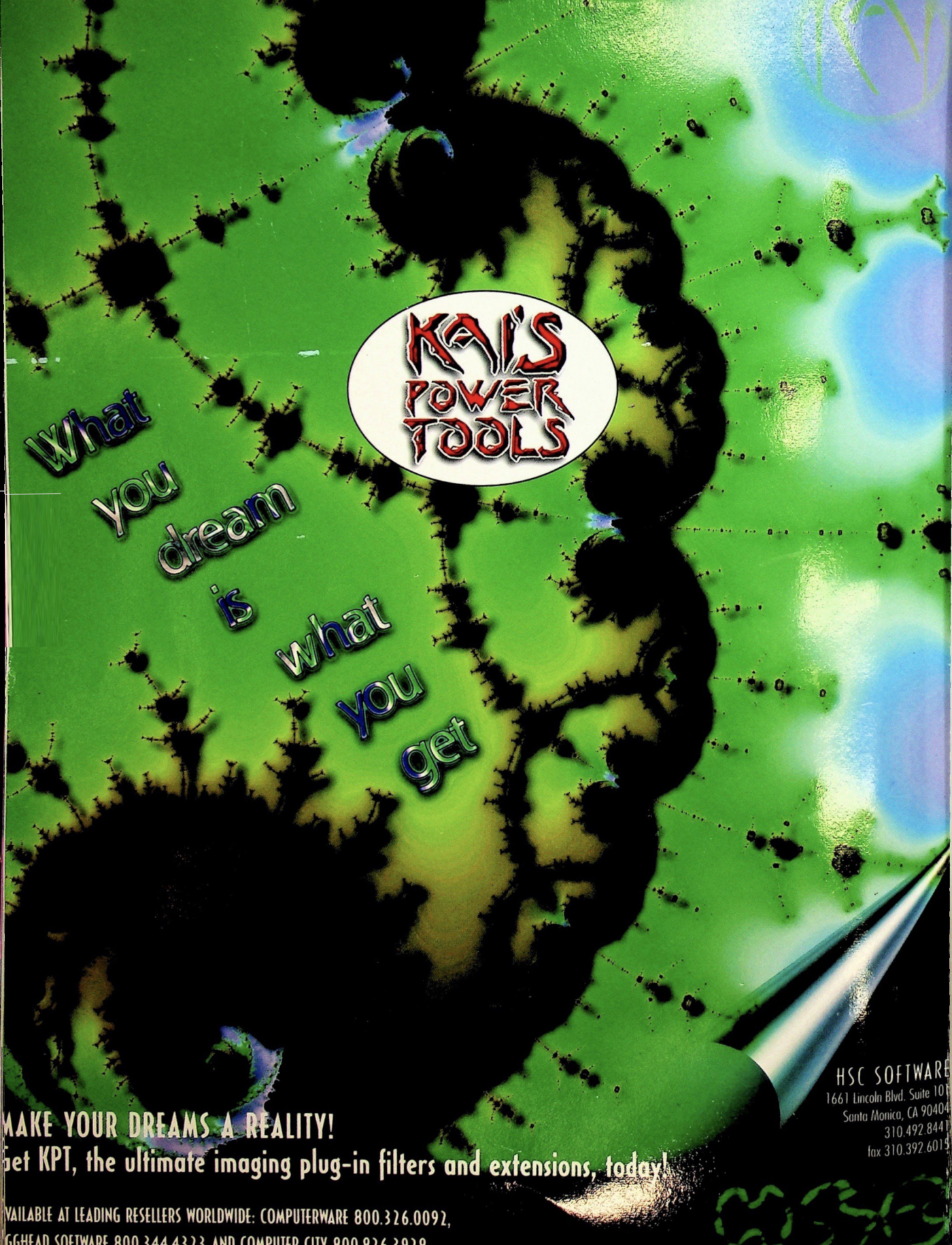
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